

# EAST WIGHT

## LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

MAY 2015



LOTTERY FUNDED



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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This Landscape Character Assessment is for the East Wight area of the Isle of Wight. The East Wight covers around half of the Island's land mass stretching from close to the western boundary of the Down to the Coast East Wight Landscape Partnership Scheme area to the Island's coastline from St Catherine's Point in the south to King's Quay in the north.

A well settled landscape it includes a number of the Island's larger urban areas (Ryde, Sandown, Lake, Shanklin, Ventnor) located on the coastline all of which experienced major expansion in the C19th and C20th as resort towns; the smaller historic port and now land locked town of Brading; the larger villages of Wootton Bridge, Binstead, and Bembridge; smaller villages and settlements of Fishbourne, St Helens, Seaview, Nettlestone, Newchurch, Arreton, Winford, Adgestone, Alverstone, Wroxall, Whitwell, Niton, Rookley, Godshill, St Lawrence and Bonchurch along with a number of more scattered hamlets and isolated farmsteads and cottages.

Despite the number of towns and villages across the area, outside of the urban areas, the landscape retains a strong rural character with some areas remaining remote and tranquil. However, in some areas the countryside has experienced significant change particularly in the late C20th altering its character.

The landform and the varied geology of the area have given it a complex landscape character, rich in biodiversity with a wealth of historic features and cultural associations. All of these factors are illustrated by the extent of international, national and local designations found across the East Wight.

The John Brownscombe Rural, Environmental and Landscape Consultancy was contracted by the East Wight Landscape Partnership to undertake this Landscape Character Assessment in June 2014.

The Landscape Character Assessment has been commissioned to help to inform the development of a full bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the East Wight Landscape Partnership's Down to the Coast Landscape Partnership Scheme.

The main objectives of the LCA are to:

- Assess the character of the area, identifying its component landscape types and landscape character areas. To take a comprehensive and integrated view of the landscape and encompassing historic, ecological and cultural factors. The historic, ecological and cultural components of the LCA are based on existing data, records and GIS information
- Describe the landscape character of the East Wight and its individual character types and areas.
- Detail past and present perceptions and cultural associations with the area

- Map landscape character types and areas using GIS and to develop a database of attributes for key features and landscape elements
- Identify significant past changes in the landscape and current and future forces for change
- Consider broad management issues to be considered within each landscape character area to restore, conserve or enhance it

Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) is a standard, recognised and systematic approach for identifying, describing, classifying and mapping the landscape. It helps to explain what makes landscapes different from one another.

It involves identification of features or combinations of elements that contribute to the character of the landscape. The assessment process then provides a clear and reasoned understanding of the issues affecting the landscape, enabling the appropriate recommendations for its future conservation and management.

This LCA has been completed in line with the Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland (2002) which sets out the nationally recommended approach.

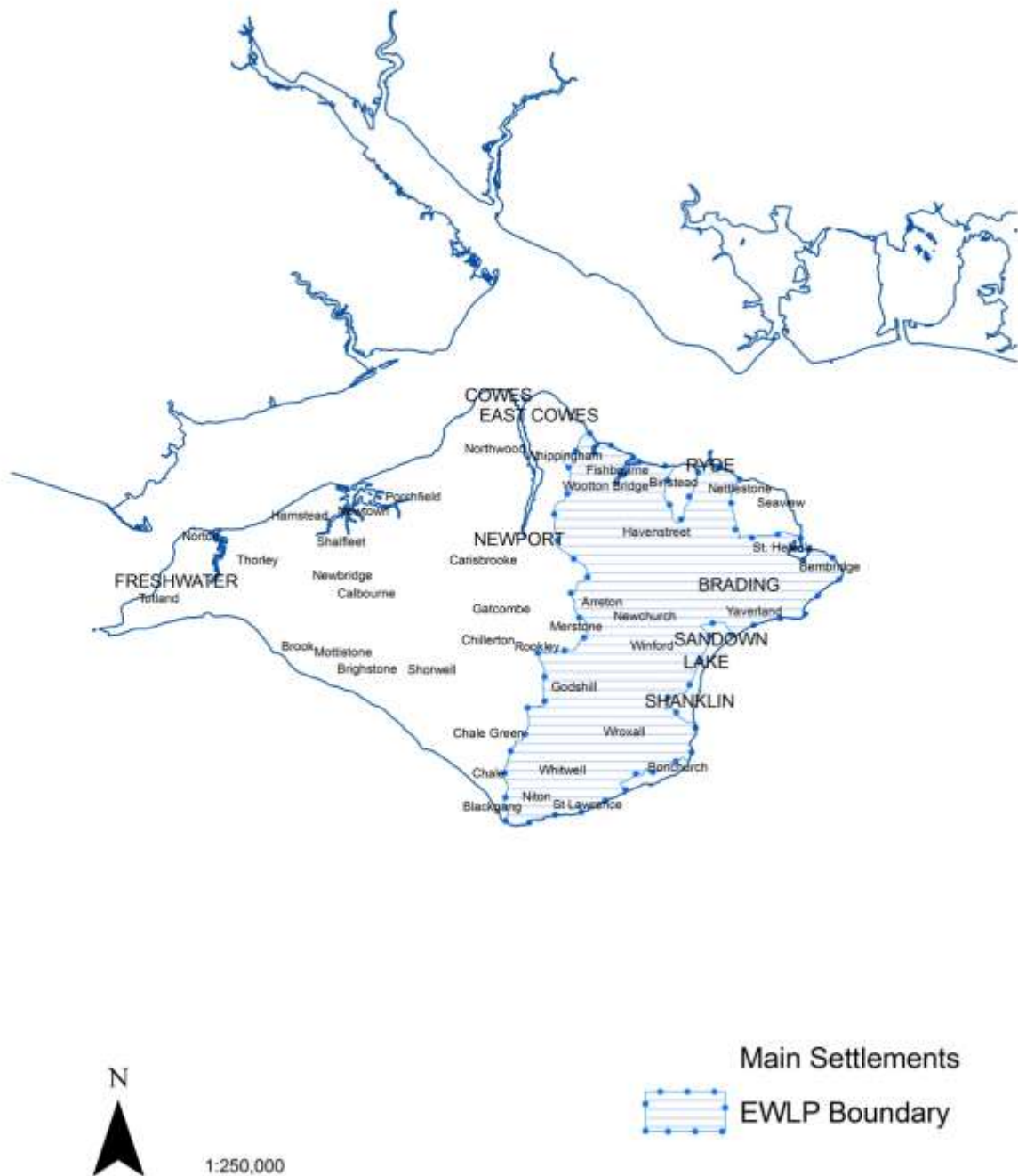
Consultation has helped to inform this Landscape Character Assessment. At an early stage in its formulation a Facebook page and group were established to share information and garner views. Two presentations were given to the East Wight Landscape Partnership Board setting out the scope and then the draft findings of the project. In addition to this, draft Landscape Character Types, Landscape Character Areas and Key Characteristics were displayed at the Annual Recorders Conference of the Isle of Wight Natural History and Archaeological Society.

A draft document was produced in early 2015 and a link to an electronic version was promoted through the Facebook page and group and given to all members of the East Wight Landscape Partnership Board. A letter was also sent to all the Town and Parish Councils within the East Wight setting out the context and purpose of the LCA, promoting the link to the draft and asking for any comments.

This report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 1: Introduction
- Chapter 2: Summary of Significance
- Chapter 3: Physical Influences
- Chapter 4: Ecological Influences
- Chapter 5: Human Influences
- Chapter 6: Perceptions
- Chapter 7: The Landscape Character of the East Wight





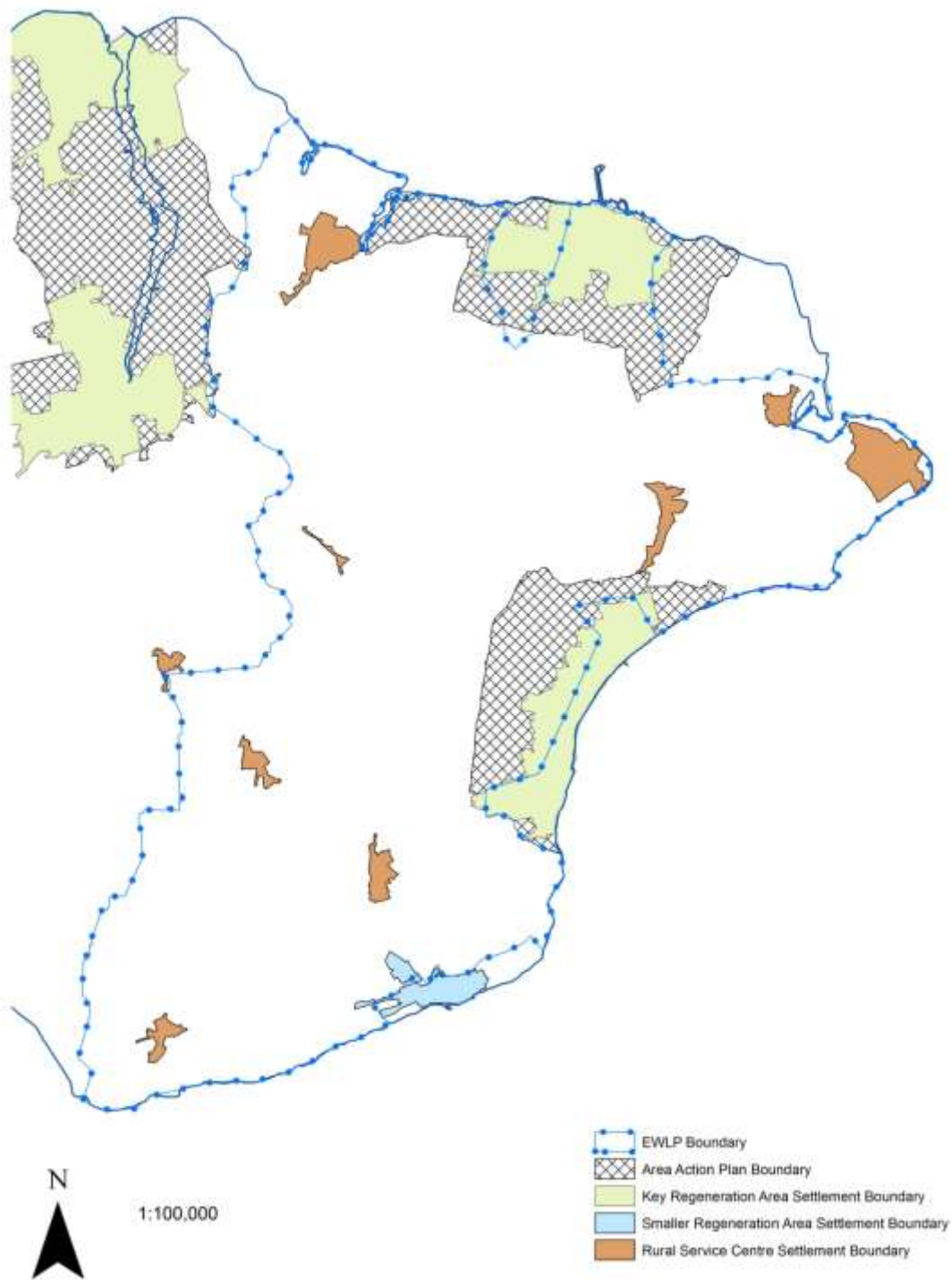
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Figure 1: Down to the Coast - East Wight Landscape Partnership area and main settlements



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Figure 2 : Civil Parishes



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Figure 3 : Island Plan Policy boundaries

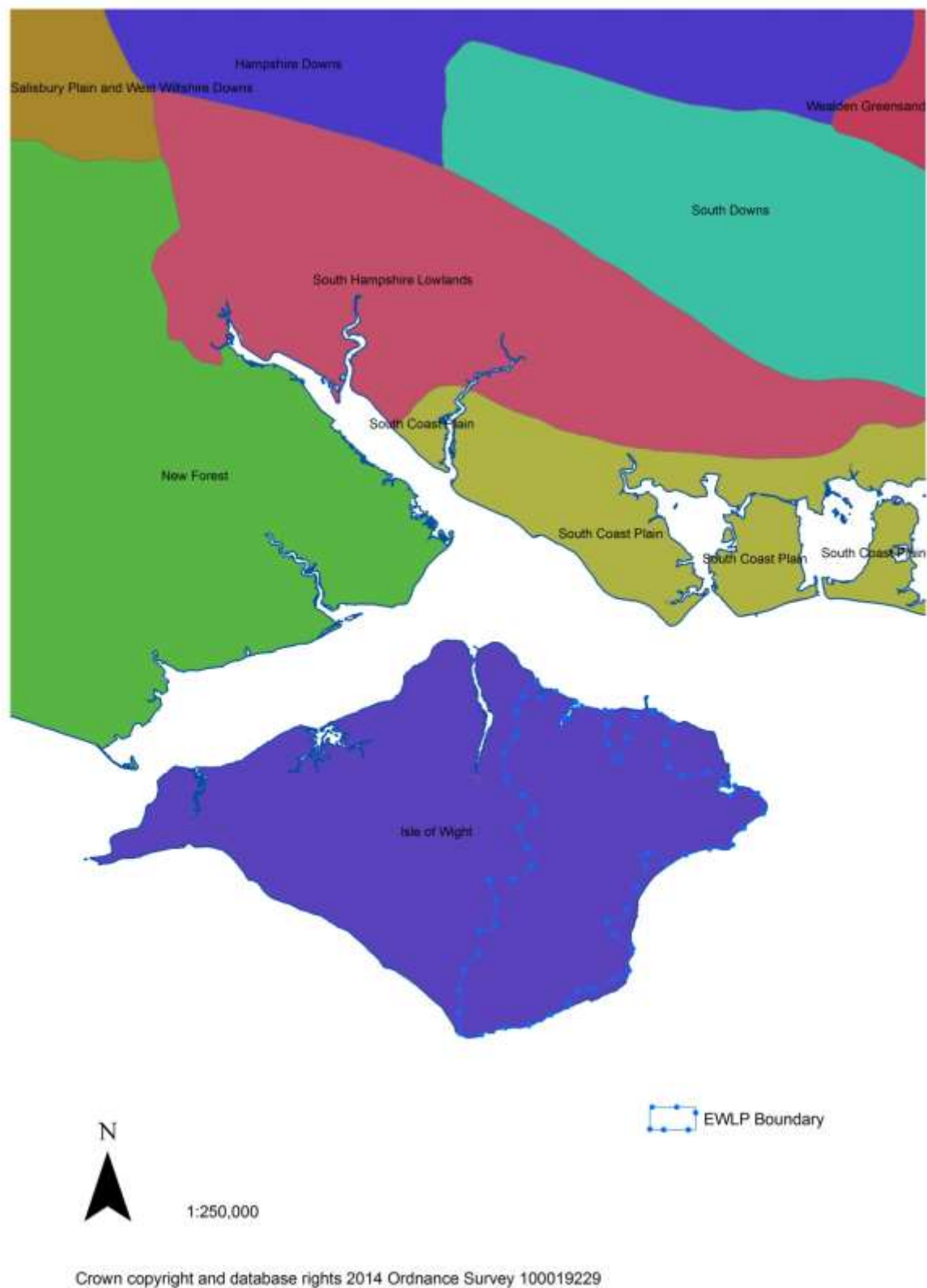


Figure 4: National Character Areas in relation to the East Wight



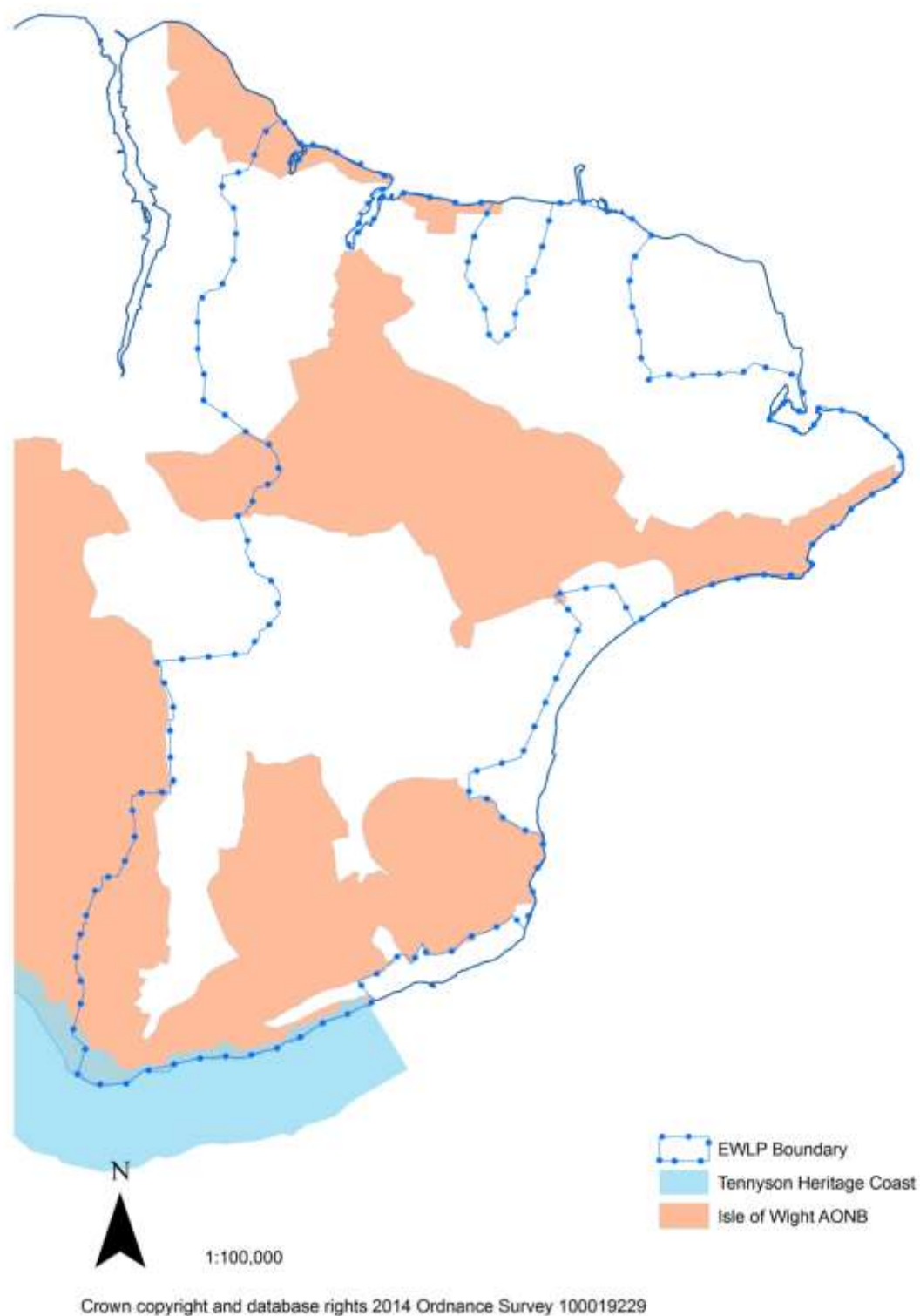


Figure 5 : Isle of Wight AONB and Tennyson Heritage Coast

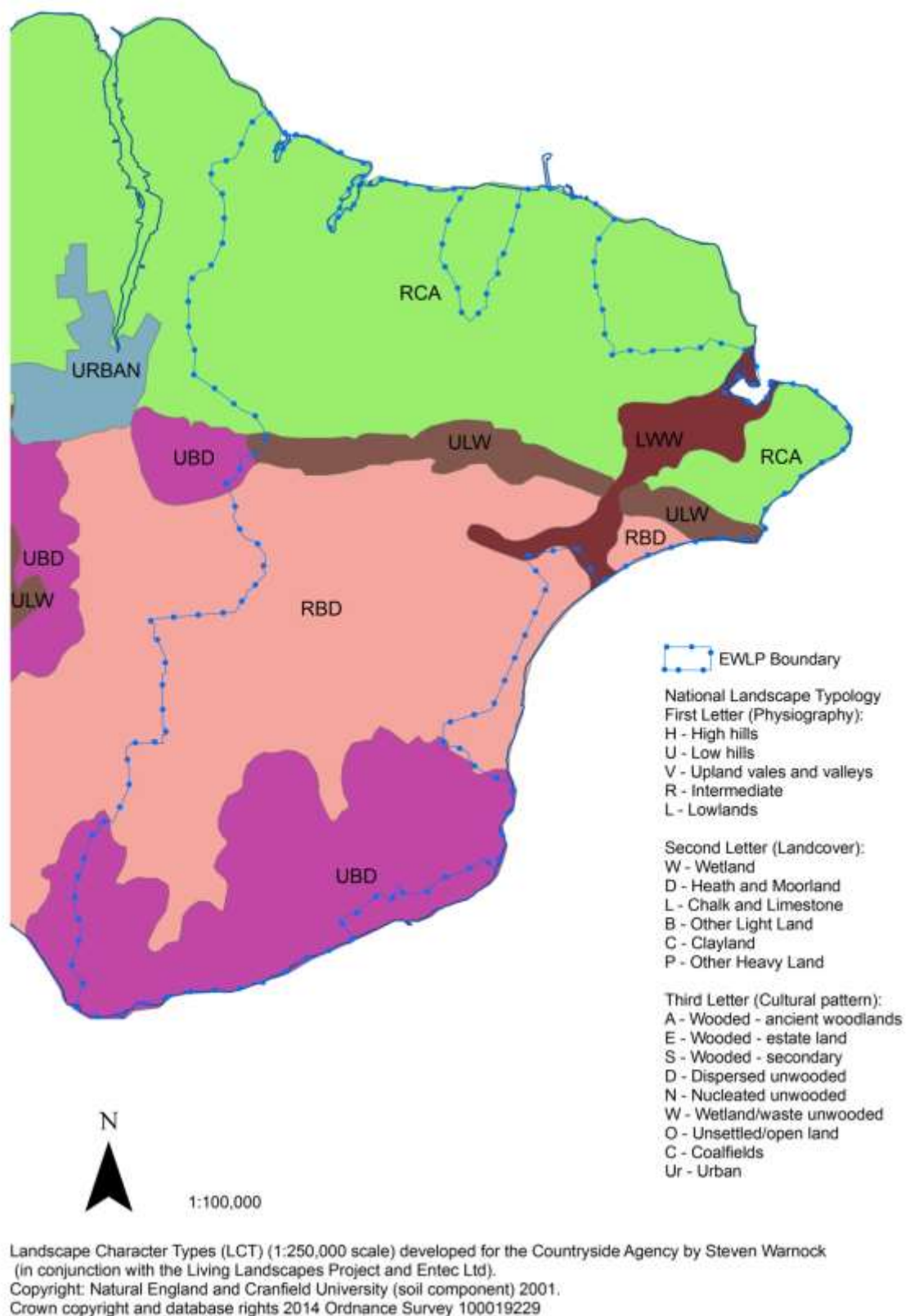


Figure 6: National Landscape Typology

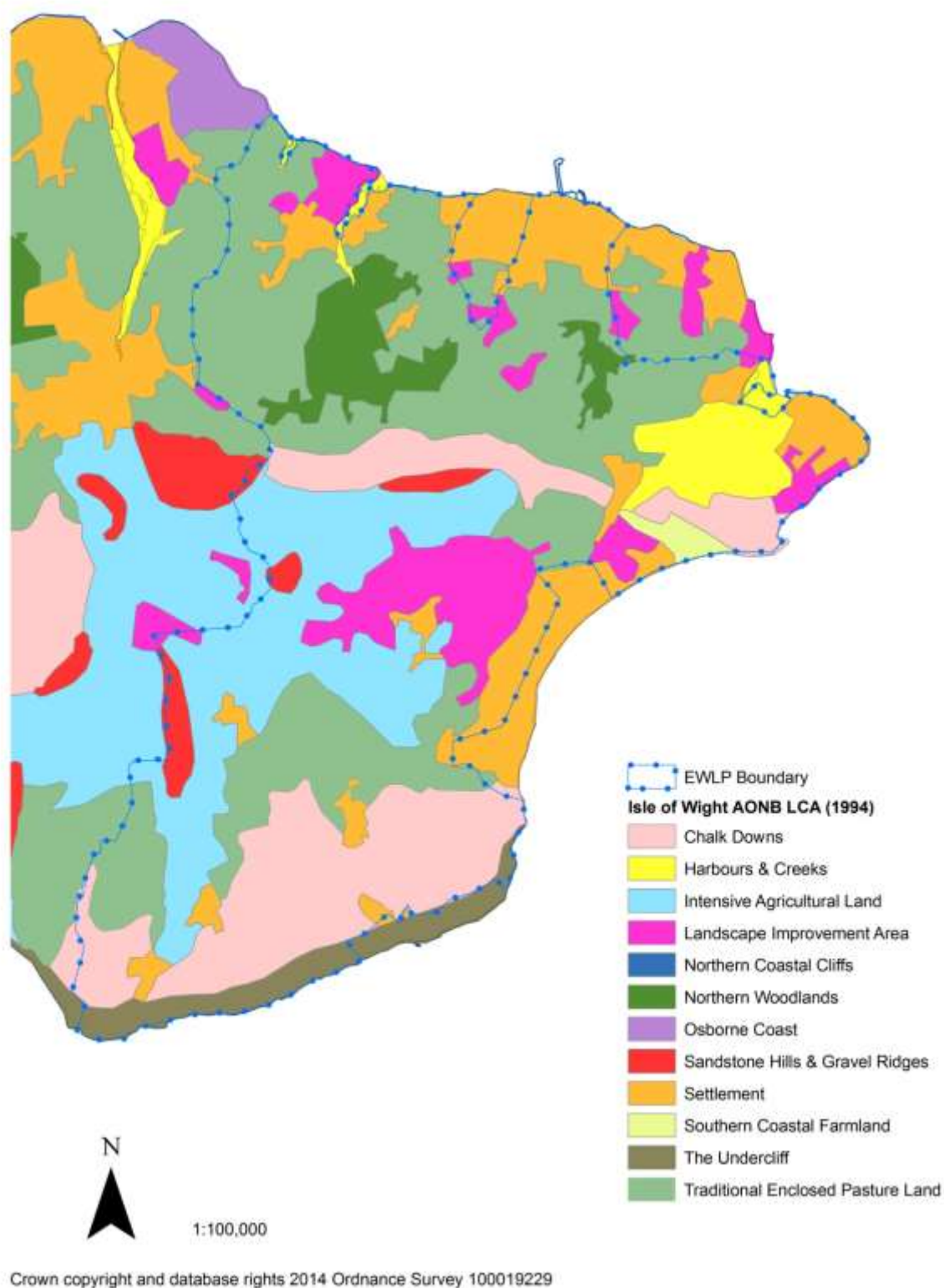


Figure 7 : Isle of Wight AONB Landscape Character Assessment 1994





## CHAPTER 2: SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE

The East Wight is a distinct but highly varied and complex landscape. This is largely due to the underlying geology and landform which is remarkably diverse for such a small area. These have been exploited by people over millennia placing their settlements close to natural water sources and in locations afforded shelter by the higher land, farming the land for food, growing and harvesting timber from woods, quarrying stone for building, and using certain sites for defence and ceremonial purposes. With the isolation of the Isle of Wight from the mainland (separation is thought to have occurred approximately 6000 years ago), perhaps Islanders and those people living in the East Wight were even more reliant on what the landscape could give them than those on the mainland who could access materials from much further afield.

The East Wight has great time depth with evidence of human occupation from the Paleolithic period onwards. Evidence of this exists today in archaeological sites and finds, scheduled monuments, historic buildings, place names, settlement patterns, folklore and legend.

The wider East Wight has many small hamlets and villages with larger villages and seaside towns around the coast (the exception being Brading which was once a port but due to the silting up and reclamation of land is now some miles inland from the coast).

The northern part of the area is pastoral and wooded due to its heavier clay and silt soils. To the south the central downland ridge with its archaeological features grazing and fine views in all directions acts as a backdrop to views of the East Wight from the Solent. South of the ridge you travel into the arable and market gardening landscape of the Arreton Valley with its fertile sandstones and alluvial soils. Further south once again you enter into a pastoral landscape with its springs and wet meadows nestle below the southern downs.

Historically it was important to have access to as many resources and landscape features as possible to provide for people's needs. Many of the Anglo-Saxon estates, tythings and later the Medieval parishes on the Isle of Wight took in the north and south coast and all the land between in the form of tall thin areas, locally often likened to 'bacon rashers'.

The East Wight landscape continues to be fashioned by its people. This and the effect of geology and natural processes have led to many different habitats being available for many different species of wildlife. Many sites are recognised for their importance through international, national and local designation. Habitats in the area are home to some very important and UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority species such as Water Vole, Red Squirrel, Granville Fritillary butterfly and many more.

During the mid to latter part of the C18th the idea of touring Britain, purely to experience its scenic qualities began to become fashionable amongst the English

leisured classes. This fashion which became known as the 'Picturesque' movement discovered the natural beauty of the Isle of Wight. Many books were written on tours of the Isle of Wight describing and extolling its picturesque qualities. This in turn led to parts of the East Wight becoming the location of choice for summer residences and marine villas of the genteel classes. Later guides to the Isle of Wight include information on the houses built by those discovering the Isle of Wight and living in the area (either part time or permanently). The East Wight features heavily in this clamour to experience the picturesque, which then led to the development of the resort towns on the edges of the proposed Landscape Partnership area.

John Keats, Charles Dickens, Algernon Charles Swinburne, Karl Marx, Charles Darwin, Lewis Carroll, JMW Turner, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow have all lived or stayed in the East Wight and of course Queen Victoria and Prince Albert chose to base the Royal household at Osborne close by in East Cowes.

The East Wight still has resonance with Islanders today as there is a clear difference in character between it and the rest of the Island.

The sea features in many views across the East Wight area and is an important influence on its character. The gentle action of the Solent on the soft clays and silts of the northern coastline is punctuated by its tranquil creeks and harbours. The largest of these being at Bembridge where the Eastern Yar flows to meet the Solent having risen in the south of the Island near to the village of Niton and passes through the East Wight. Behind Bembridge Harbour an area of extensive reclaimed marshland of the former navigable Brading Haven extends some distance inland. There are a number of coastal towns and villages along this coastline the largest being Ryde which developed during the C18th, and continued to grow during the C19th and C20th. Inland from the coast the pastoral landscape rolls and rises gently to the south. Its clay geology has made the land difficult to work for arable cultivation resulting in pasture fields enclosed by hedgerows for stock proofing, with hedgerow trees, copses and plantation woodlands also being a feature of the area.

This gentle landscape is backed by the dramatic landform of the central chalk downs. This chalk downland ridge runs across the East Wight from east to west, starting at the white cliffs of Whitecliff Bay and Culver Down, dipping down where the Eastern Yar cuts through the area close to the historic town of Brading, and rising again to Brading Down. Continuing westwards the highest point on Ashe Down (130m) is topped by the C18th Seamark a landmark of the area. The central downs then undulate westward and include Mersley, and Arreton Downs.

The watercourses of Palmer's Brook, Blackbridge Brook and Monktonmead Brook all rise from springs north of the central chalk and flow towards the northern coastline of the East Wight.

South of the central chalk ridge the landscape falls sharply to an open landscape of the Arreton and Sandown plains. This arable landscape includes areas of commercial greenhouse glass taking advantage of the light levels and sunshine

hours for which the area is renowned. This sunshine and the beautiful sandy beaches of Sandown Bay saw the development of the coastal resorts of Sandown, Lake and Shanklin. The railway line which runs down the east side of the Isle of Wight and contributed to the opening up of the area to visitors. The Eastern Yar gently meanders from its source close to Niton through the wet meadows at Roud and onto Godshill where the landscape opens into the fairly flat plains of the Arreton Valley and its rich soils. Grazing lands bound the river as it passes through the area with large arable fields being further back from the course of the river.

In the east of the area a few miles in from Sandown Bay the landscape is more undulating due to a series of lower sandstone hills and gravel ridges, the villages of Newchurch and Rookley and towns of Lake and Shanklin being on this higher land with the latter two having dramatic sandstone cliffs close to the coastline. The landform at Sandown is lower with the Sandown Levels being situated immediately behind the beach and joining with the Eastern Yar valley and former Brading Haven.

Further south the land rises again and becomes wetter due to the occurrence of natural spring lines (the source of the rivers Medina and Eastern Yar) with inland exposed Upper Greensand cliffs creating a dramatic feature capped by the southern chalk plateau of the southern downs the highest on the Isle of Wight (Ventnor Downs 235m). Dipping steeply to the south, the Upper Greensand is once again exposed as an inland cliff with the slumping landslip of the Undercliff situated below and terracing down to the coast. This dramatic landscape the Undercliff is south facing and sheltered by the southern chalk downland creating its own micro climate. The resort town of Ventnor developed to take advantage of this and was also chosen as the location for the National Hospital for Chest Diseases (now the site of Ventnor Botanic Garden a nationally important historic park and garden).

## CHAPTER 3: PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

The variety and character of the landscape of the East Wight starts with its complex underlying rocks and soils, landform and hydrology. It is the combination of these that have dictated how certain areas have been used and influenced by human occupation and agriculture over time. This has given us the diverse landscape character of the East Wight with its natural and historic environments and cultural associations that we enjoy and value today.

### GEOLOGY AND SOILS

The oldest rocks on the Isle of Wight are the Wealden Group, Wealden and Atherfield Clay Formations. In the East Wight these are located in the area of Red Cliff and Yaverland in Sandown Bay. These soft clays are easily eroded by the action of the sea, leading to a series of slumped land movements in the area. This geological series is very fossil rich with many important finds being made as a result of exposure due to the action of coastal erosion. Inland, the geology and overlying soils have resulted in a mix of arable and pasture land use in the local area.

To the west of the Wealden Group the geology is composed of Ferruginous Sands which run in a broad band across the centre of the East Wight. These are overlain by light free draining soils which are easily worked resulting in a prevalence of arable cultivation. Exceptions to this being areas influenced by heavier alluvial soils, peat and the Eastern Yar watercourse. These wetter conditions are less conducive to cultivation and result in land use consisting of water meadows and pasture.

To the south the Ferruginous Sands give way to Sandrock Formation, Carstone, Gault and finally Upper Greensand. This gradual change results in a rolling landscape with a gradual incline towards the southern downland. The interaction of the Gault Clay and the Upper Greensand has resulted in an steep incline at the downland edge and where there has been mass movement through landslip, occasional exposure of Upper Greensand inland cliffs.

To the north of the Ferruginous Sands the same geological sequence of Sandrock Formation, Carstone, Gault and Upper Greensand is found but in a more compressed narrow band. As the slope rises the land use becomes increasing pastoral with woodland often being found on very steep slopes.



Rising sea levels in the late Cretaceous period led to increased calcium rich sediments which eventually created the Lower and Upper Chalk Formations. Around 60 million years ago the tectonic process which led to the formation of the Alps folded this chalk along an east west axis resulting in an uplift of the area. Gradual erosion of the centre of this resulted in the two distinct chalk downland areas seen in the East Wight landscape today. The southern chalk downland creates a backdrop to many views. The southern edge of the this downland plateau has a very steep dip slope forming a dramatic backdrop to the town of Ventnor and smaller settlements of Bonchurch, St Lawrence and St Catherine's.

South of the southern chalk downland the Upper Greensand Formation is almost completely exposed as an inland cliff with historic slumped landslips forming the landscape known as the Undercliff. This very picturesque landscape stretches from Blackgang in the west to Luccombe in the east, and is well settled due to its visual appeal and micro climate.

The central chalk ridge traverses the Isle of Wight from Culver in the east to the West High Down and the Needles chalk sea stacks in the very west (outside of the East Wight area). More narrow than the southern downs the ridge is cut through by the Eastern Yar River at Brading.

North of the central chalk ridge the geology is dominated by softer Tertiary rocks which were laid down over the chalk when the area was covered by shallow deltas, estuaries and lagoons with short periods of inundation from the sea. Consisting of clays, silts, sands and in some areas limestone rich Bembridge Marls, Bracklesham Group, Barton, Bembridge and Hamstead Formations all these areas are less well drained than the Ferruginous Sands of the Cretaceous Period resulting in a predominance of pasture and woodland across the area. The coastline is fairly well developed from Wootton Bridge through to Bembridge with some pockets of undeveloped coastal woodland at Woodside, Quarr and Priory Bay.

Parts of the East Wight landscape are influenced by the presence of drift geology deposits overlaying the solid geology. River Terrace Deposits of sand and gravel are found inland along the north east coastline, and close to the route of the Eastern Yar. Some Tidal Flat Deposit and Alluvium are associated with the area's watercourses in particular the Eastern Yar but also Palmers Brook, Blackbridge Brook and Monktonmead Brook and other minor watercourses which are either tributaries of these or which drain directly into the Solent. Peat Deposits are found close to some of the minor tributaries of the Eastern Yar notably at Munsley, and Bohemia. Beach and Tidal Flat Deposits are also found around the coastline and in particular along the north east coast. There are a few small areas of Brick Earth in the northern half of the East Wight area. Areas of

Clay with Flints cap the southern downs introducing acid soil heathlands over alkaline chalk.

Figures 8, 9, 10, and 11 show the geology of the East Wight and its landform.

## WATERCOURSES

All the major watercourses in the East Wight area flow into the Solent.

The largest watercourse is the Eastern Yar River, its source is located in the village of Niton at the base of Niton Down. Its valley floor widens as it flows initially northwards before veering north east then east and finally north east again to Bembridge Harbour where it flows into the Solent. Historically it would have flowed into the sea in the Brading Haven a large inlet which stretched inland from Bembridge to the port town of Brading. Successive land reclamations have created wetland grazing pasture with the continued course of the river being accommodated through a series of engineered channels. Over its length it is joined by a number of tributaries draining higher land away from the river valley some of which such as Scotchell's Brook and the Wroxall Stream flowing for some distance before they join the main river.

North of the central chalk ridge a number of smaller watercourses flow northwards to join the Solent at the coast. These include Palmer's Brook, Blackbridge Brook, and Monktonmead Brook.

All these watercourses have their source close to the base of the chalk down land. It is here that the porous chalk meets with less permeable rock causing water to issue from the ground.

This is also the case for a series of small streams which flow from the southern chalk out to the English Channel. Many of these are located through the Undercliff and are a feature of that landscape, including the stream flowing through Flowers Brook, the stream at Ventnor Park and the Cascades at Ventnor seafront. Two further watercourses of particular note are small streams which have led to the creation of two deeply incised ravines locally referred to as Chines which cut through sandstone cliffs at Luccombe and Shanklin. In the west of the area a similar coastal feature at Blackgang was the initial draw for visitors to Blackgang Chine in the C19th, giving access to the beach from the cliff top. This route has now been lost but Blackgang Chine remains a popular visitor attraction.

Along the northern coastline a series of small streams at Quarr, Binstead and Springvale drain clay areas flowing only a short distance before reaching the coast.

The watercourses of the East Wight area have been a major influence on the selection of the area for the East Wight Landscape Partnership's Down to the Coast Scheme. The western boundary demarcates the western edge of the catchment area for the Eastern Yar south of the central chalk downland and of Palmer's Brook north of the chalk.

Figure 12 shows the main watercourses in the East Wight.

The agricultural quality of the soils of the area is shown in Figure 13 which gives details of Agricultural Land Classification. Grade 1 and Grade 2 lands have the best potential for cultivation.

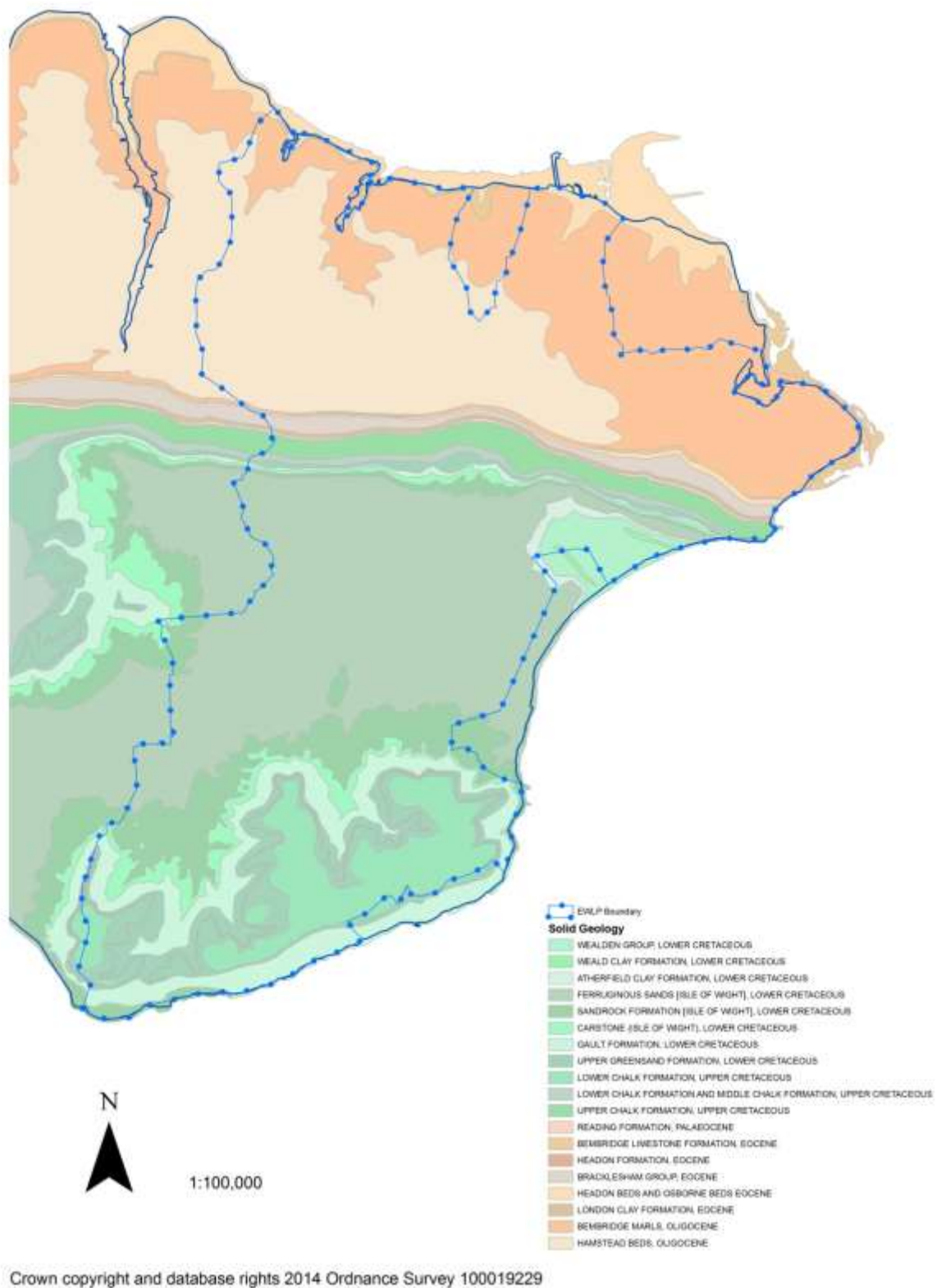


Figure 8: Solid Geology

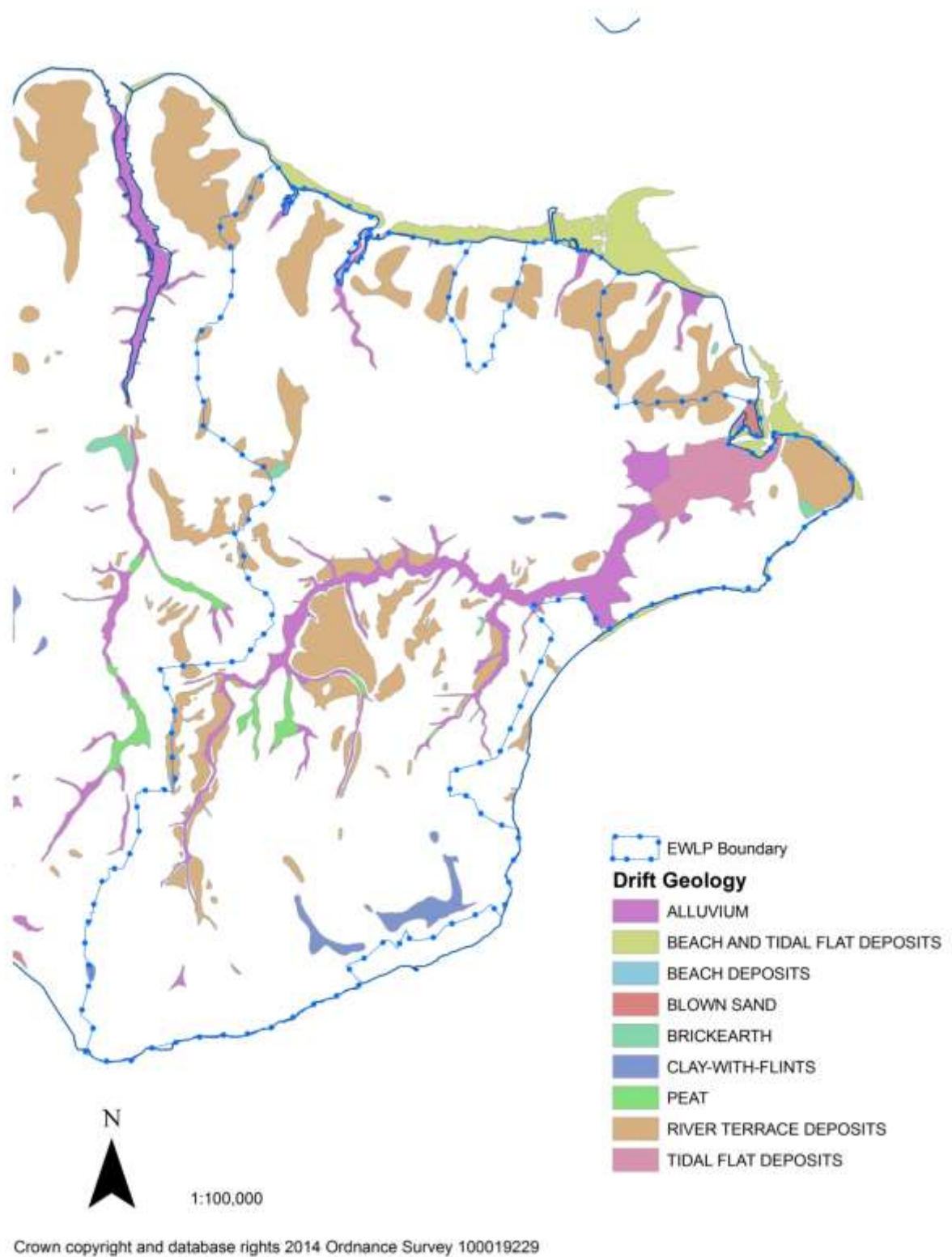
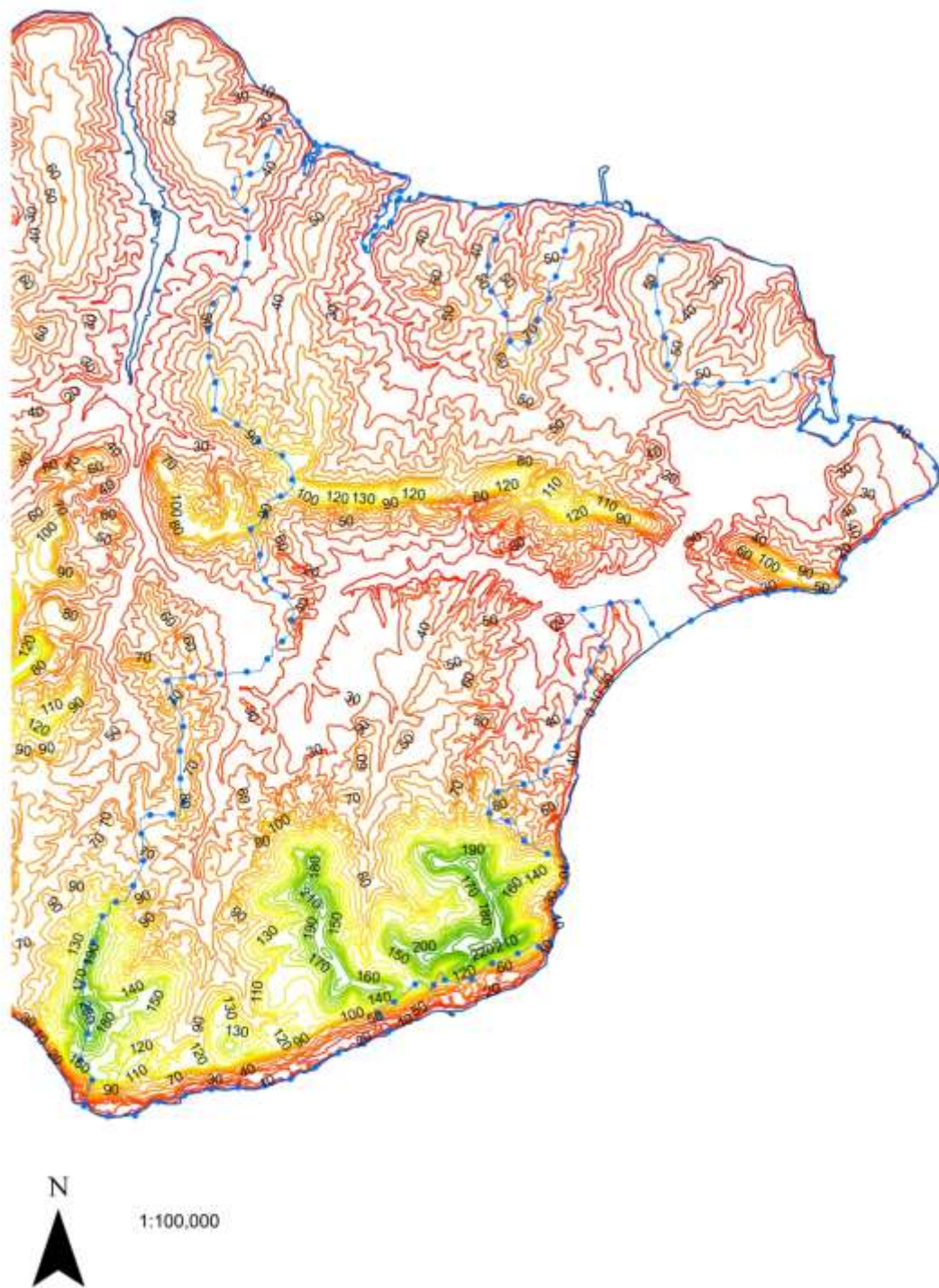


Figure 9 : Drift Geology



Figure 10: Mass Movement (Landslip) Geology





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Figure 11: Elevation (10m contour lines)



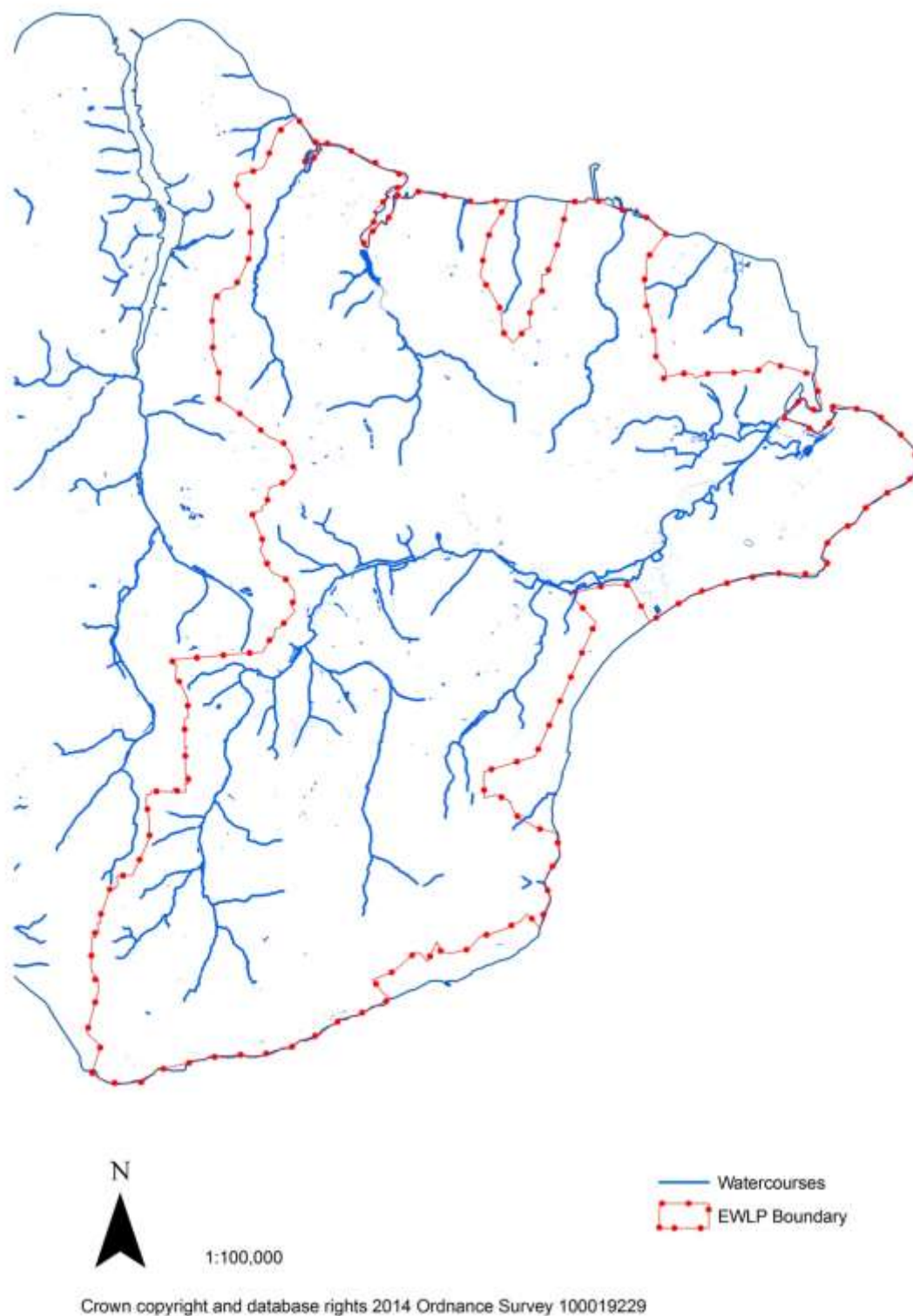


Figure 12 : Watercourses

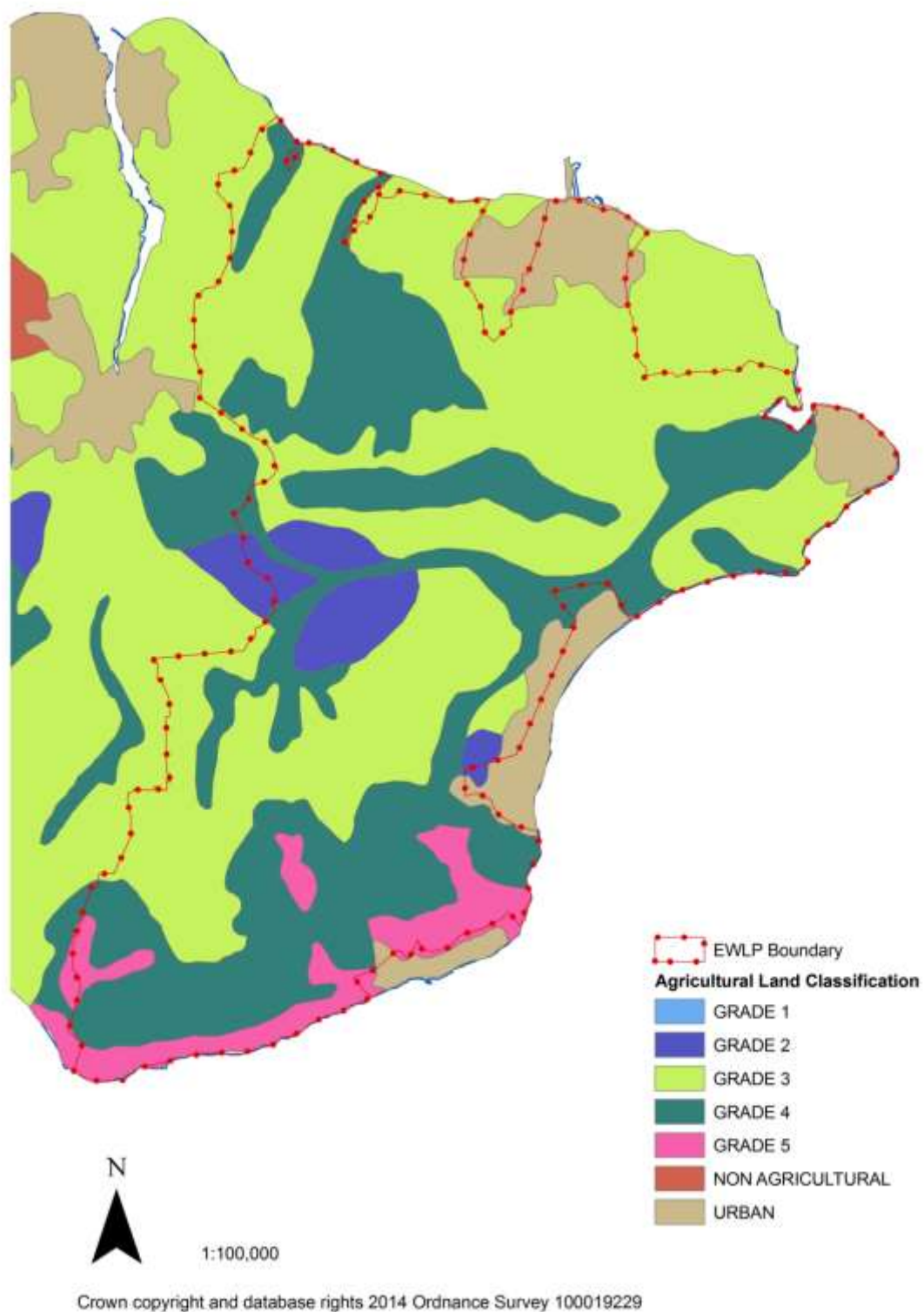


Figure 13: Agricultural Land Classification



## CHAPTER 4: ECOLOGICAL CHARACTER (BIODIVERSITY)

The underlying geology; the geographical location of the Isle of Wight (being on the southern edge of the range of northern Arctic species and on the northern edge of Mediterranean species); its Island status (providing protection from potential predators such as Mink); the action of natural processes such as coastal erosion and the way in which people have used and managed the land, gives the area a wealth of different habitats for wildlife creating a landscape rich in biodiversity.

The East Wight area has a range of international, national and locally important nature conservation sites, including Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). These areas are recognised for their important habitats and species including: ancient woodland, maritime cliffs and slopes, lowland chalk grasslands, coastal and flood plain grazing marsh, lowland heath, saline lagoons, coastal sand dunes, intertidal mudflats and seagrass beds, coastal vegetated shingle. The importance of the shoreline and coastal waters for overwintering waterfowl, important breeding tern and gull populations, rare plants and invertebrates has led to the designation of the Solent and Southampton Water as a Ramsar site and Special Protection Area.

Natural England has recently revised the profiles for its National Character Areas (Figure 4). These are areas following natural landscape rather than administrative boundaries each with its own distinctive landscape characteristics. The Isle of Wight has its own National Character Area (127). The NCA profiles act as guidance documents to help to inform better understanding of local landscapes and guide policies and practices seeking to conserve and enhance them.

The wide range of habitats that occur in the East Wight area can perhaps be best grouped under the following headings:

- Farmland
- Downland
- Estuaries and wetlands
- Woodland
- Maritime cliffs

### FARMLAND

The farmland of the East Wight landscape is a mix of arable and pasture and ranges from extensive grazing and involvement in Environmental Stewardship programmes to areas of more intensive agricultural crop and animal husbandry. The complex geology of the Isle of Wight and in particular areas where acid and alkali soil

conditions are in close proximity creates the conditions for a rich arable weed flora habitat.

Hedgerows are a feature of much of the East Wight farmed landscape. Many were lost in the C19th and C20th in areas now under arable cultivation but in pastoral areas many reflect an historic field pattern dating back many centuries. Hedgerow lines formed as a result of C19th and C20th re-organisation or amalgamation of smaller fields into larger plots are often less species rich consisting largely of Hawthorn and Blackthorn when compared to those with older origins. Hedgerows can act as important wildlife corridors to link together blocks of woodland across the landscape. They can also act as an important habitat for wildlife (particularly farmland bird species, Dormouse, Red Squirrel and in locations bat species). Field margins and headlands are also an important and valuable habitat in arable areas allowing flora and fauna a refuge from disturbance.

Semi-natural lowland grassland are agriculturally unimproved grasslands on neutral soils across enclosed lowland landscapes. In the East Wight they are mainly located north of the central chalk on poor draining clay and marl soils, further areas are found south of the central chalk on older Cretaceous rocks. Often found in small groups close together, separated by species rich hedgerows and pockets of ancient woodland they are an important habitat in their own right further strengthened by this mosaic of habitats.

## DOWNLAND

There are two areas of downland landscape in the East Wight. The first is a central fairly narrow ridge which traverses the Isle of Wight from east to west and a second area is a wider plateau incised by a number of downland edge coombes located in the south of the East Wight. The central ridge consists of chalk downs with a parallel line of greensand hills to the south. The southern area is bounded to the north by rolling greensand hills.

A mix of calcareous grasslands with their rich flora and associated butterfly, moth and cricket species and areas of acid grassland and heathland and acid grassland over sandstone hills or where the chalk is capped by clay with flint or angular flint deposits, these areas are internationally recognised for their nature conservation interest. This value is reliant upon continued extensive grazing (often by sheep) and control of the invasion of scrub.

Calcareous grassland species include sheep's fescue, meadow oat-grass along with low growing herbs such as Sald Burnet, Thyme, Rock Rose, Bird's Foot Trefoil and Small Scabious. In some locations the nationally scarce Early Gentian can be found (although mostly associated with the West Wight) and also Horseshoe Vetch the larval food plant of the Adonis Blue Butterfly. Largely found on the south facing slopes of the chalk downs these areas have shallow very free draining topsoils. On

steeper slopes with patches of exposed rock and bare soil there are scattered examples of Sheep's Fescue and Carlina Thistle along with Mouse-eared Hawkweed, Kidney Vetch and specialist moss species. Where soils are deeper and more moisture retentive examples of Upright Brome grassland are found. This relatively tall grassland develops in areas which are less heavily grazed and tends to be less species rich.

There has been rapid loss of heathland since the mid C19th as land has been enclosed for arable or improved pasture farming purposes. Remaining areas in the East Wight are associated with the acid drift geology deposits found capping the chalk downs (Ventnor Downs for example) or on sandstone hills (Bleak Down).

Dry heathland is typically species poor including patches of common gorse, bracken, heathers and heathland grasses along with Heath Milkwort, Heath Pearlwort and Tormentil. Wet heath is much more species rich especially when it is subject to extensive grazing including cross leaved heath, patches of sphagnum moss, deer grass and purple moor grass. These wet heath areas can also be found in the valley floor of the Eastern Yar in areas rich in peat deposits.

Where heathland and acid grassland is found on drift geology overlying chalk it can often be seen in conjunction with typical chalk grassland or calcicole species. This is locally known as chalk heath.

Acid grassland types have yet to be fully surveyed for the Isle of Wight. Examples of particular grassland species are known including *Festuca ovina*, *Agrostis capillaris*, *Rumex acetosella*, *Galium saxatile*. It can also occur in association with dense stands of bracken where it can support a number of woodland plants, including most notably stands of bluebells. Acid grasslands can also be found on stabilised dune systems at St Helens and on parts of the reclaimed land at Brading Marshes.

Heathland and acid grasslands are home to a number of priority species such as the Dartford warbler, stonechat, adders, mottled grasshopper and a number of uncommon bees and wasps and specialist moss species.

## ESTUARIES AND WETLANDS

All of the main watercourse of the East Wight flow into the Solent via a series of creeks, estuaries or in some urban areas piped outflows. Palmer's Brook discharges into the Solent at King's Quay a tranquil wooded estuary in the north west of the area. Blackbridge Brook flows into the large Mill Pond behind Wootton Creek a developed, bustling harbour and location of the Fishbourne to Portsmouth Wightlink Car Ferry service. The Monktonmead Brook flows north towards the town of Ryde disappearing from sight under the developed area before being discharged north of The Strand. The Eastern Yar flows into Bembridge Harbour in the very east of the area. A number of smaller streams flow out to the Solent at Quarr and Spring Vale.



A series of small streams also flow a short distance through the Undercliff and out to the English Channel, two of which have incised deep ravines into the sandstone creating Luccombe and Shanklin Chines.

The estuaries at King's Quay, Wootton Creek and Bembridge are all within the Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar and Special Protection Area and are intertidal harbours partially enclosed by sand and shingle spits at their mouths . They are internationally valued for their nature conservation interest particularly in relation to bird species and their habitats. Consisting of a number of distinct habitats including: saltmarsh; mudflats; coastal vegetated shingle; coastal sand dunes; reedbeds; coastal grazing marsh, sheltered muddy gravels; sand flats; seagrass beds and saline lagoons; estuaries are important intertidal areas rich in diverse habitats and with dynamic changing conditions with each tide. Many estuaries still support natural transitions to terrestrial habitats which is an increasingly rare situation in much of southern England.

Saltmarsh is a valuable resource that contributes to the international importance of the Solent as an important resource for wading birds and waterfowl, also acting as high tide refuges for bird species feeding on adjacent mudflats, and as breeding sites and feeding grounds. It also contributes to the binding up of sediments and can help to attenuate the action of waves within an estuary.

Coastal and flood plain grazing marsh is the most extensive wetland habitat on the Isle of Wight. Many areas have been reclaimed (Brading Marshes) all are grazed and some are cut for hay. Ditches can be especially biodiverse and where grazing has been improved, saline intrusion can create more species richness than similar freshwater areas further inland.

Mudflats are extremely productive in terms of their benthic fauna, this in turn helps to support internationally important species of wildfowl and waders. They have a high abundance of organisms but low diversity with few rare species.

Coastal vegetated shingle are found where the structure of the beach has become stable and finer materials are present to allow plants to take hold. The dynamic nature of coastal processes means that vegetated areas can be short lived so are often colonised by species able to withstand occasional disturbance.

Coastal sand dunes are scarce on the south coast of England, St Helens sand dune system is considered to be of regional importance. They provide a unique habitat for a rich community of highly specialised plant and animal species.

Reed beds are found in nearly all the Island's estuaries and provide important habitat for reed nesting birds.

Seagrass beds are nationally rare and highly productive as decaying grass provides important nutrients for marine ecosystems. They help to stabilise sediments and create shelter and attachment sites for other plants and animals.

Saline lagoons are pondlike shallow brackish or saline water bodies partly separated from the sea by a beach, spit or seawall. They are a nationally rare and priority habitat all Isle of Wight examples are within a SSSI and some are also within the Solent and Isle of Wight Lagoon Special Area of Conservation and are home to specialist species able to tolerate the changing conditions.

Fens and peats are found within the East Wight. A number of 'Poor Fens', where the water has been received from acid, base poor rocks such as sandstone. These are found at Munsley Bog and Bohemia Bog in the river valley of the Eastern Yar.

Rivers and streams, as already ready set out under the physical influences chapter, largely rise from the chalk in the south of the Island and run for most of their length through cultivated and farmed areas. They tend to be biologically impoverished due to a number of factors including, diffuse pollution, sediments from soil erosion, engineering interventions, low flows and waste water discharges.

## WOODLAND

Woodland in the East Wight is strongly influenced by the underlying geology and consists of ancient woodland (areas that have been continuously wooded since at least the year 1600), plantation woodlands dating from the C19th and C20th usually predominantly coniferous but with some broadleaved species, new woodland planting through Woodland Grant Funding and JIGSAW (Joining and Increasing Grant Scheme for Ancient Woodland) and recent semi-natural woodland largely developed through natural regeneration and often termed secondary woodland.

In the East Wight, woodland is largely located north of the central chalk on the heavier clayland soils, this is where most but not all of the ancient woodlands are found. Ancient woodlands have a rich woodland flora with bluebells and a number of indicator species such as Anemone, Dog's Mercury, Wild Service Tree and Sessile Oak not usually found outside of ancient woodland areas.

Large areas of plantation conifer woodland are also found across the north of the area planted in the C19th and C20th on heathland, grassland and former ancient woodland sites. A mix of commercial non-native conifers and broadleaved species often planted in a linear pattern. Hanger woodlands are found on the steep slopes of downland or cliffs where cultivation and grazing are difficult. There are a number of large woodland areas south of the central chalk on the sandstone geology differing subtly from those north of the chalk due to their free draining soils. The Undercliff includes large areas of secondary woodland dominated by Sycamore, Beech, Horse Chestnut and Holm Oak having been introduced as ornamental species in the C19th

and subsequently becoming naturalised. Woodland on calcareous soils tends to be dominated by a canopy of Ash with a shrub layer abundant with Hazel coppice. Woods on the sandy soils comprise English Oak and Birch over bracken with neutral soils tending to support English oak, birch, maple and ash over a shrub layer of Hazel. Areas of wet woodland have often developed from former withy beds no longer managed for willow production for basket weaving. There are a number of small bands of coastal woodland along the north east shore the Isle of Wight within the East Wight area.

The most important ancient woodland sites are given protection through designation as Sites of Special Scientific Interest. The largest group of these is between Wootton Bridge and Havenstreet called the Briddlesford Copses SSSI (also internationally recognised as a Special Area of Conservation). Eaglehead and Bloodstone close to Asheys, America Woods, Great Wood and Cliff Copse close to Shanklin are further examples of SSSIs. Parts of the Undercliff secondary woodland fall within the Bonchurch Landslips SSSI, Hanover to St Catherine's Point SSSI and Ventnor Downs SSSI.

Woodland is an important habitat for wildlife including Dormouse, Red Squirrel, bat species, Nightingales, butterfly species and other insects.

## MARITIME CLIFFS

Many and varied plant and animal species are reliant upon the geologically diverse coastal cliffs of the East Wight. The softer geology of the north east coastline of the Isle of Wight creates slumping cliffs eroded slowly by the gentle action of the Solent. From Forelands at Whiteciff Bay these soft clay, mudstone and sandstone cliffs are subjected to greater erosion from the action of the English Channel and the impact of south westerly storms. From Whitecliff Bay to Redcliff the taller hard chalk and sandstone rock produce sheer faced cliffs. A small stretch of softer Wealden clays at Redcliff and Yaverland create a series of wet slumped cliffs which are rapidly eroded. At Luccombe sheer sandstone cliffs give way to the slumped terraced landslips of the Undercliff which continue through to the west of the area at St Catherine's Point and around to Blackgang. Many areas of the north east and south east coastline of the East Wight includes developed coastal towns and villages. In these areas the natural process of coastal erosion has been interrupted through the installation of coastal defences. This is also the case from Bonchurch to Steephill Cove and at Castlehaven in the Undercliff. Where coastal erosion does continue unabated it provides a dynamic changing environment important for the survival of many species.

Cliff vegetation is dependent upon underlying geology and soil conditions, stability, water availability and impact of weather conditions. It can range from pockets of a small number of pioneering plant species through to species rich maritime grassland

communities. In some areas, where conditions allow, scrub and secondary woodland can develop along with wetland habitats alongside spring lines and areas of standing water. The inland cliff of the Undercliff although some distance from the eroding coastline is often open to coastal salt laden winds.

This variety of geology and conditions has given rise to a rich and diverse range of habitats associated with maritime cliffs many of which are nationally important for key species including: cliff nesting birds such as the Peregrine Falcon; butterflies and moths such as the Glanville Fritillary; insects such as the Tiger Beetle; bees and wasps and flowering plants.

The coastline from Bembridge to St Catherine's Point is within the South Wight Maritime Special Area of Conservation in recognition of its international importance. Similarly the Tennyson Heritage Coast and Isle of Wight AONB designations include parts of the East Wight coastline and cliffs. Much of the north east coast also designated as a SSSI.

A series of Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs) has been suggested by the Isle of Wight Biodiversity Partnership to help deliver the Biodiversity Action Plan. These enable a landscape scale approach rather than focussing on single SSSI or SINC sites. There are ten Biodiversity Opportunity Areas in total and the following are located in the East Wight area: Northeastern Woods; Eastern Yar Valley; Eastern Central Ridge; Southern Uplands; Southwest Coast (small area near St Catherine's Point).

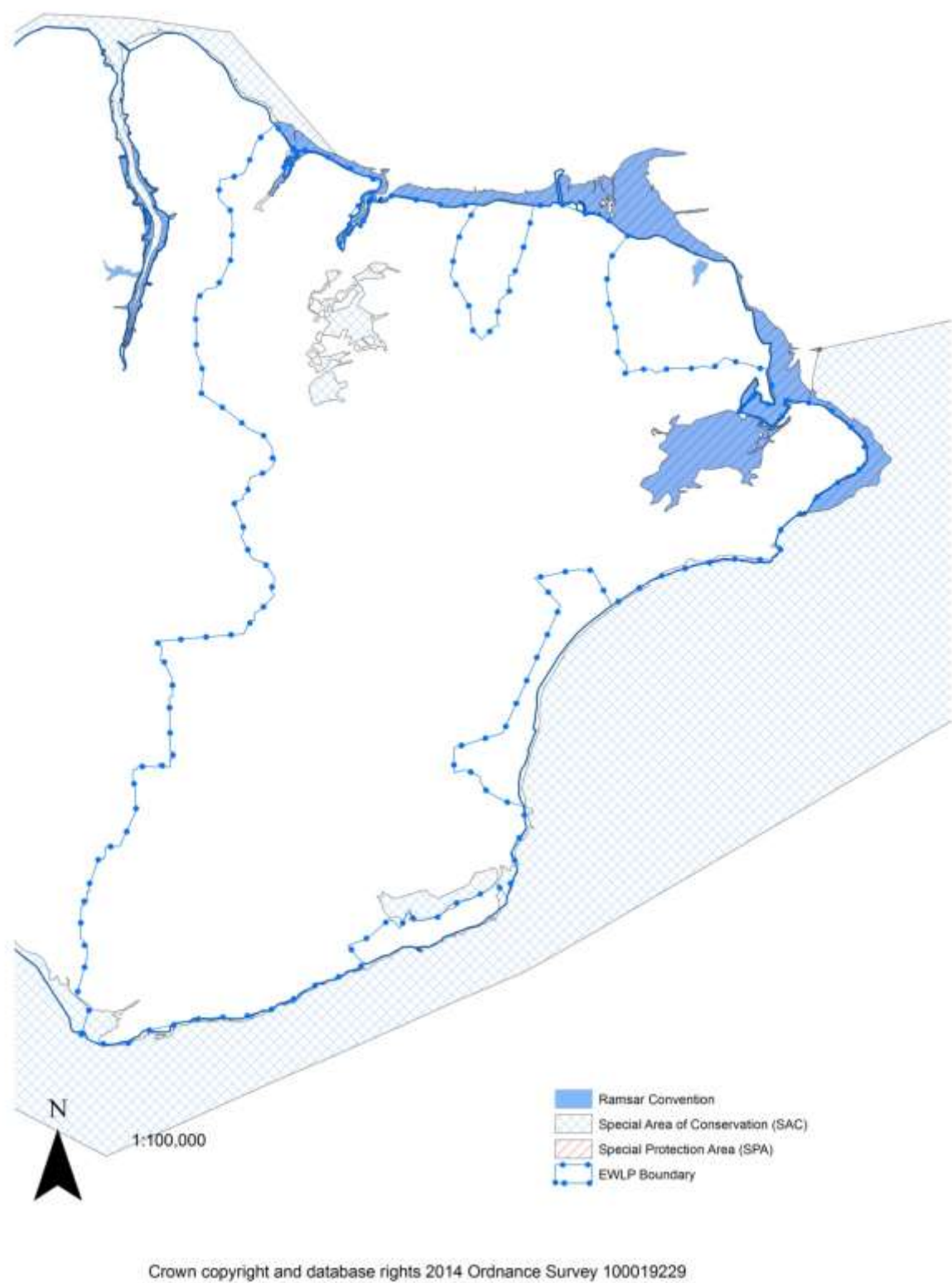
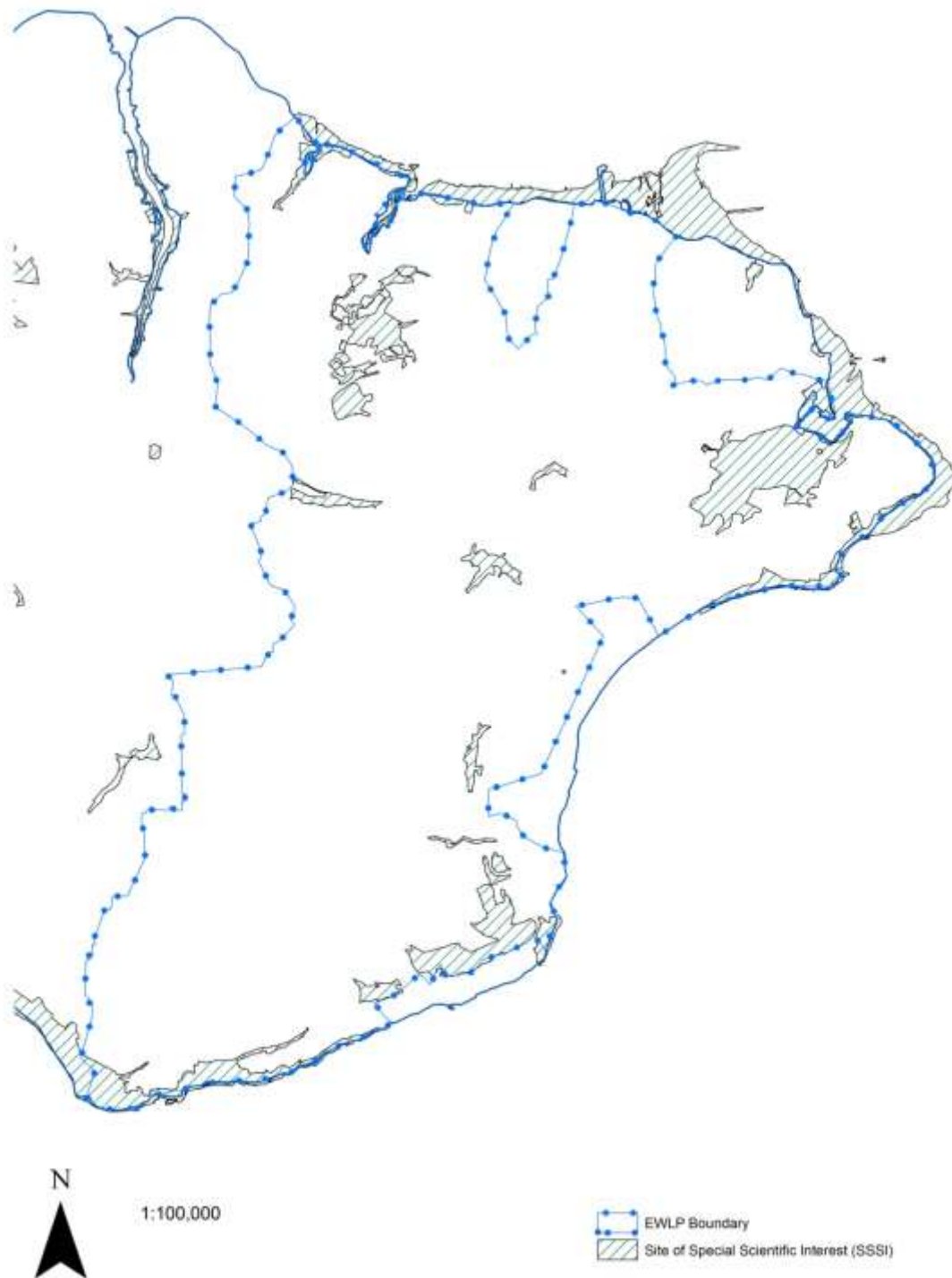


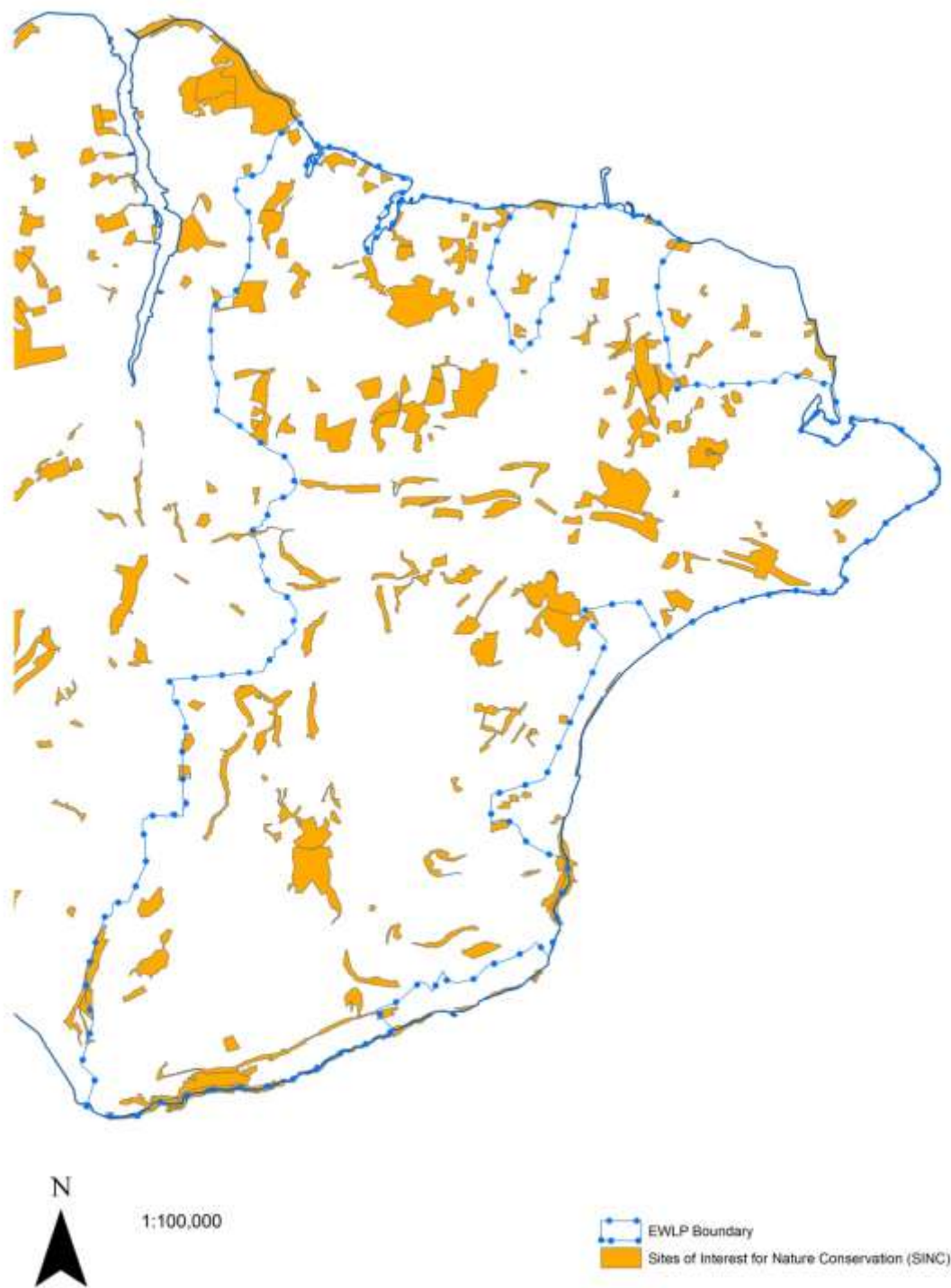
Figure 14: International Nature Conservation Designations



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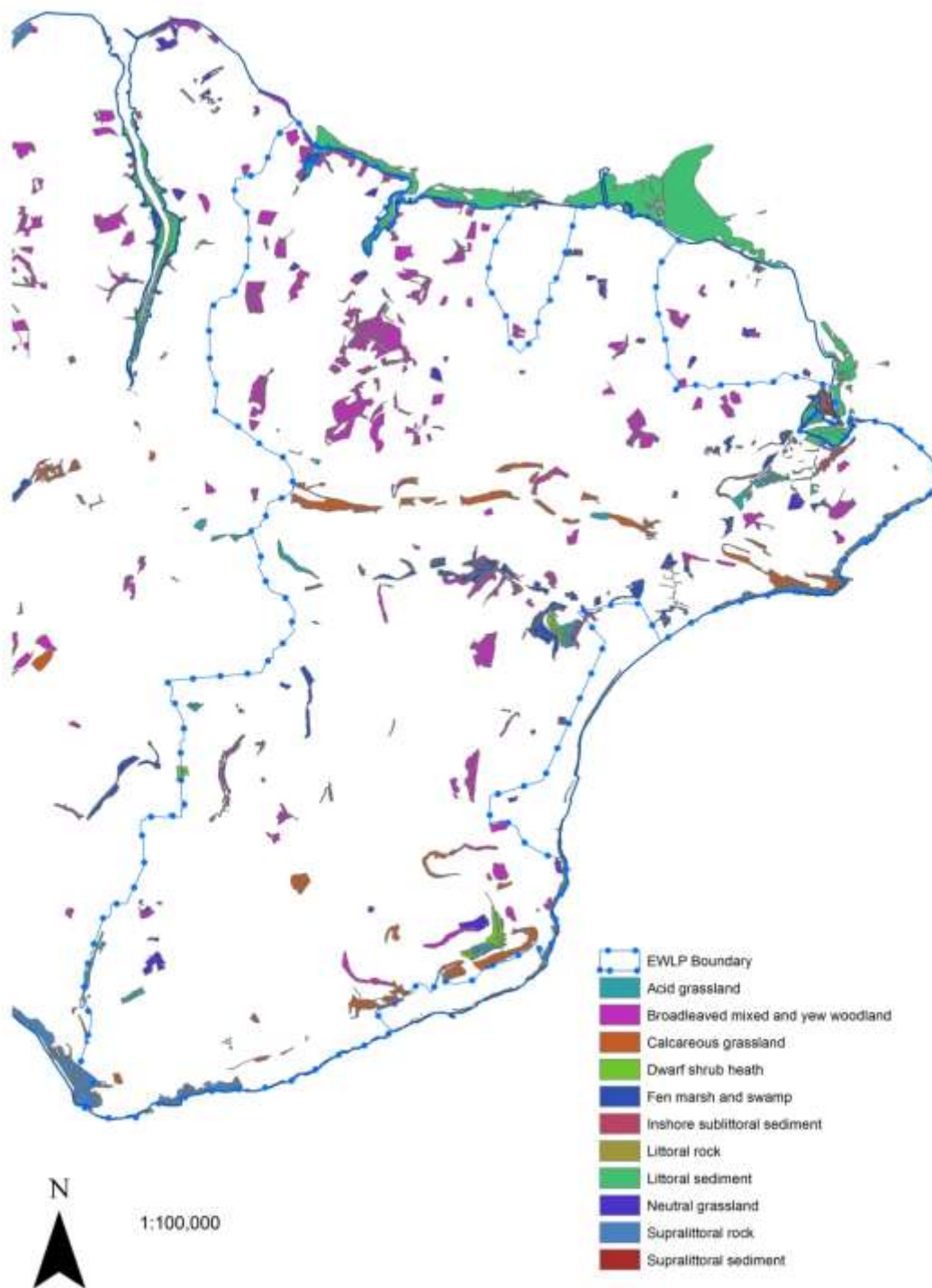
Figure 15: National Nature Conservation Designations





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Figure 16: Local Nature Conservation Designations



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Figure 17: Priority Habitats

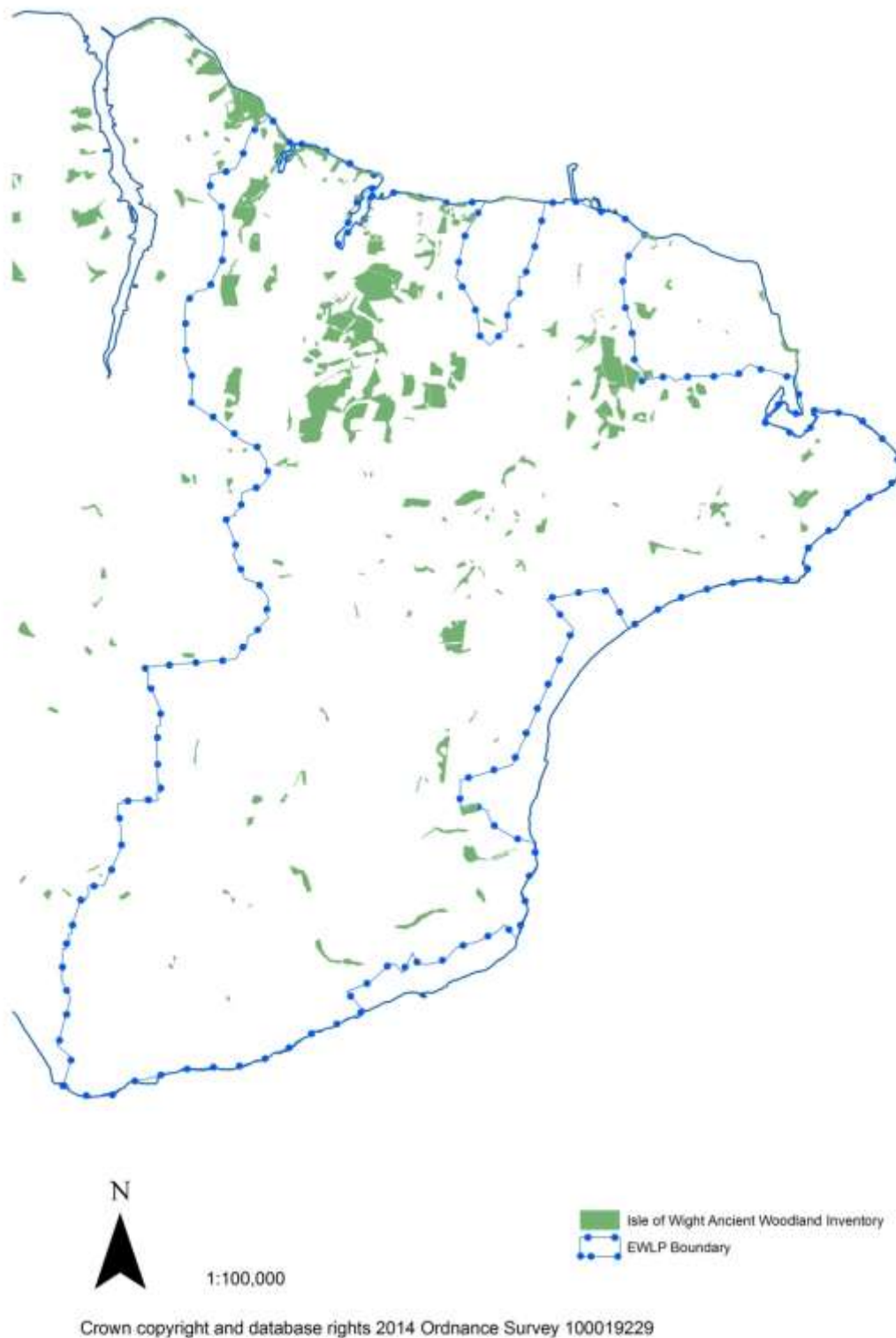
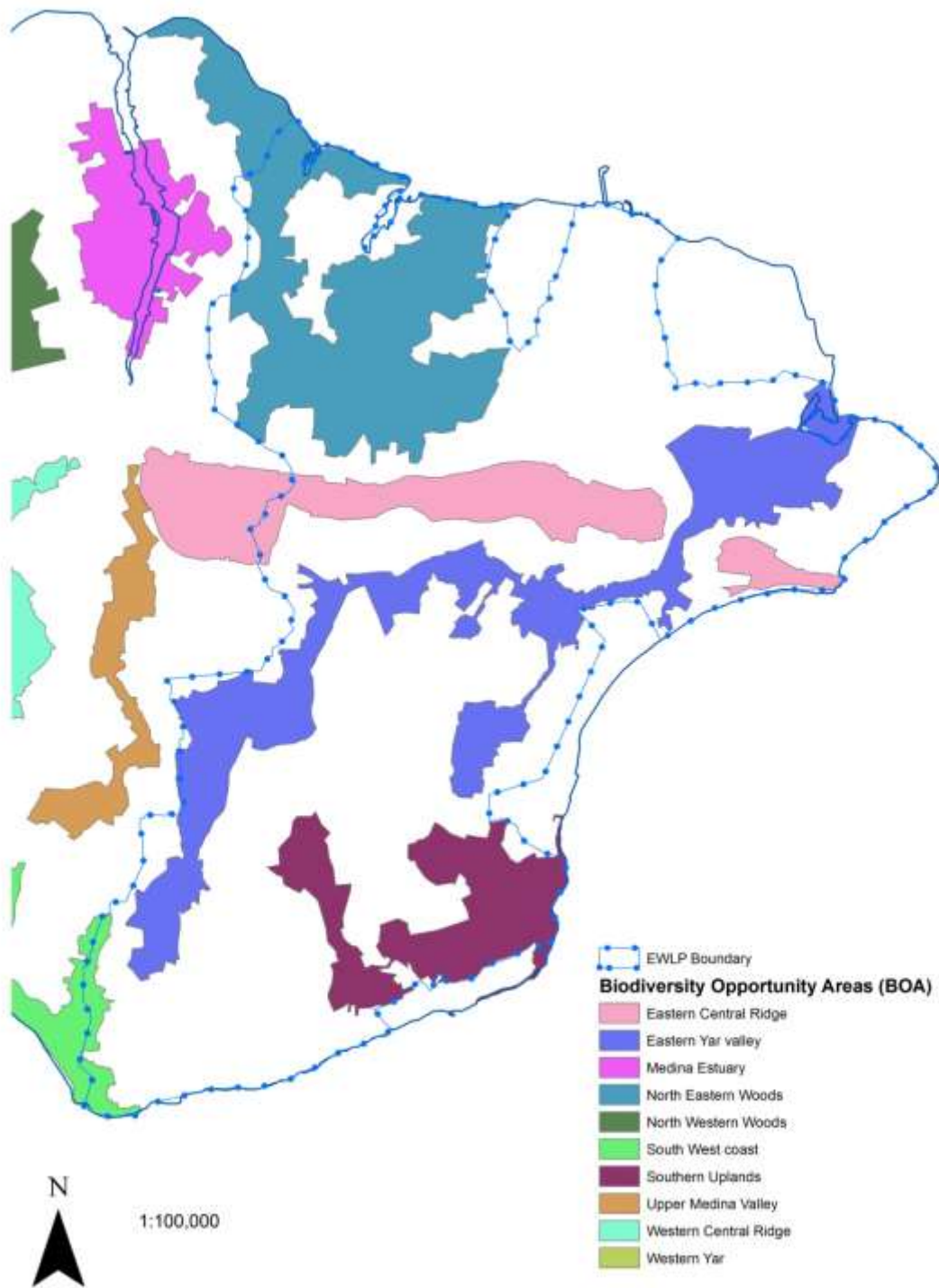


Figure 18: Ancient Woodland areas



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Figure 19: Biodiversity Opportunity Areas



## CHAPTER 5: HUMAN INFLUENCES

The East Wight has a rich historic environment with great time depth. Excavations, archaeological finds (particularly since the start of the Portable Antiquities Scheme in 2003), documentary research and the completion of a Historic Landscape Characterisation for the Isle of Wight have helped us to better understand how people have lived in and changed the area throughout history. However this knowledge base is never complete. The Historic Environment Record provides us with information on what is known and contains a wealth of records about the East Wight.

The earliest evidence for human occupation in the East Wight is found at Priory Bay and Bembridge on the north east coast, and at Bleak Down, where implements dating from the Paleolithic, as much as 500,000 years ago, have been found.

The north east coastline between Quarr and Wootton has been the subject of a long and detailed archaeological survey and has yielded many interesting finds. These include Mesolithic and Neolithic occupation sites, and wooden structures including fish traps, trackways and alignments of posts which have been dated to the Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman, Saxon and medieval periods. Scatters of Roman and medieval pottery indicate trade with mainland Britain and the continent and give an indication of how important the shoreline and estuaries of the East Wight have been to people for millennia. Further Mesolithic and Neolithic evidence and artefacts have been found around the coast at Redcliff near Yaverland and in the Undercliff. The central downland and southern downs of the East Wight have also produced finds from these periods and may indicate settlement close by where natural spring lines occur. The Eastern Yar river valleys have also given evidence of activity from these ancient peoples.

Elements of Bronze Age downland landscapes of Ashe Down, Brading Downs, Luccombe Down and Week Down survive today and tell us of the importance of these upland areas as a location for ceremonial burial and perhaps also for defence. Further downland sites have yielded many finds. It is thought that woodland was cleared from the downland by Bronze Age people leading to the creation of chalk grazing lands and heathland. Other archaeological evidence tells us of an industrious people, possibly having maritime trade and with a social hierarchy (burial mounds of important personages). There is some evidence of field systems showing that parts of the downland would have been farmed for arable crops during this period.

The East Wight has a number of sites from the Iron Age, including an enclosed settlement at Knighton and possible Hill Fort close to Yaverland in what would have been a strategically important location due to former larger and navigable Brading



Haven. Finds in this area provide a story of occupation from Iron Age, through Roman to early Medieval in what is now a large arable field.

Roman East Wight was an ordered landscape of rural villas and estates. There are a number of sites in the East Wight where the remains of Roman buildings have been found. The most significant of these was at Morton near Brading where in the C19th a large villa with mosaic floors was unearthed by a farmer. Today this is the Brading Roman Villa, a popular visitor attraction where you can walk around the site undercover and learn more about Roman 'Vectis'. Its location reinforces the strategic importance of the former Brading Haven which was then navigable fairly close to the villa site. Many more Roman finds have been made across the East Wight including coins, amphora, evidence of salt production, and ceremonial artefacts. These tell us of a people who traded with the mainland and continental Europe.

Pagan Anglo-Saxon graves have been found inserted into Bronze Age burial mounds on the central chalk ridge.

In the early Medieval period former Roman estates remained important in terms of land use and settlement pattern (Brading in particular). From the late C7th large administrative units or estates developed containing land in most of the Island's topographic zones (from the Solent coast in the north to the southern coastline and all the arable, downland and woodland in between). These long thin administrative units seem to have determined the boundaries of the Anglo-Saxon parochial or 'mother parishes' and are locally often referred to as 'bacon rashers' because of their shape, some of which survive into part of the modern parish boundaries today. It is thought that some of the church/manor complexes on the Island date to Anglo-Saxon times later featuring in the Domesday Book. The sundial and north wall of the chancel of St George's Church Arreton may date from this period. Other buildings are likely to have been timber constructed and have not survived.

The discovery of a Viking style cloak pin at Wootton and a Viking sword pommel at Appuldurcombe, show us that the East Wight was not immune from the Viking raids that dogged England in the medieval age.

The settlement pattern for many of the nucleated villages nestling below the downs and linear villages in the valleys is thought to date back to the Anglo-Saxon period. Brading was a planned medieval town and it is indicated that St Helens was planned or re-planned during this era.

Other medieval structures in the area include pillow mounds, strip lynchets, boundary banks, deer parks, fish ponds, moated sites, middens, and deserted/shrunken/shifted settlements. Another iconic surviving late medieval building is the St Catherine's Oratory, locally known as the 'Pepperpot' this lighthouse is located on St Catherine's Hill.

There are a number of Holy Wells within the East Wight and there were also Priors at St Helens, Appuldurcombe and Quarr. Quarr was particularly important with its own ships for the wine trade with Gascony, fish ponds, a tide mill, a fulling mill and a defensive precinct wall close to the coast with the earliest surviving gunports dating from 1365 built to defend against fear of French invasion.

Stone was exported from Binstead and Quarr for use in the building of the Norman cathedrals of Winchester and Chichester together with many other buildings as far afield as London and Canterbury, and to be used in the defence structures being built in Southampton. The East Wight also exported wool and wheat.

The Isle of Wight has always been of strategic importance for defence and a series of medieval beacon sites are recorded across the East Wight as part of an early warning system.

In the post medieval period the Island saw great expansion of its towns and the building of grand Jacobean Manors which can still be seen in the East Wight today. The north east coast of the Island in and around King's Quay became renowned as a location for shipboard and onshore selling of contraband goods.

The towns of the Island expanded further in the Georgian and Victorian periods with many fine examples of the Gentleman's Villas and parades of shops still in evidence today. The Isle of Wight was a favoured destination for those wishing to experience its natural beauty and sublime landscapes as part of the 'Picturesque' movement. Many decided to build summer houses or permanent residences including marine villas in the East Wight to take advantage of the scenery and the milder climate.

The seaside towns of Ryde, Sandown, Shanklin and Ventnor became increasingly popular during the late Victorian period and into the C20th. The building of the railway from Ryde Pier head to Ventnor in 1864 made travel to these resorts easier and increased their popularity with tourists.

A number of manors and grand houses created designed parkland landscapes around their properties during the C18th, C19th and C20th. Those of particular note and national importance within the East Wight area are, Appuldurcombe (with its Lancelot 'Capability' Brown landscape), Nunwell House, Woodlands Vale and Ventnor Botanic Garden. Osborne and Norris Castle lay just outside the area to the north west at East Cowes.

The C20th saw further expansion of the coastal towns and some of the villages of the East Wight and improvements to the highway network with the metalling of many of the roads for motorised vehicles. Some of the inland railway lines were closed in the mid C20th including the line from Ventnor West to Newport, the line from Newport to Ryde (part of which is now the Isle of Wight Steam Railway) and the line from Shanklin to Ventnor. Agricultural development in the latter part of the C20th

brought with it many changes to the landscape as did the loss of Elm trees as a result of Dutch Elm disease. Parts of the landscape have been changed and in some areas degraded by development but many areas in the East Wight have retained their beauty and can tell us a story of their historic legacy.

The national Heritage at Risk register has identified a number of listed buildings, places of worship, scheduled monuments and Conservation Areas at risk of severe damage or loss (Figure 20).

A full Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) was completed for the Isle of Wight in 2008. It has summarised the historic character of the landscape by the creation of a number of Historic Landscape Character areas. Within the East Wight there are nine such areas each has been defined on the basis of geology, topography, and historic land use and settlement patterns (Figure 21).

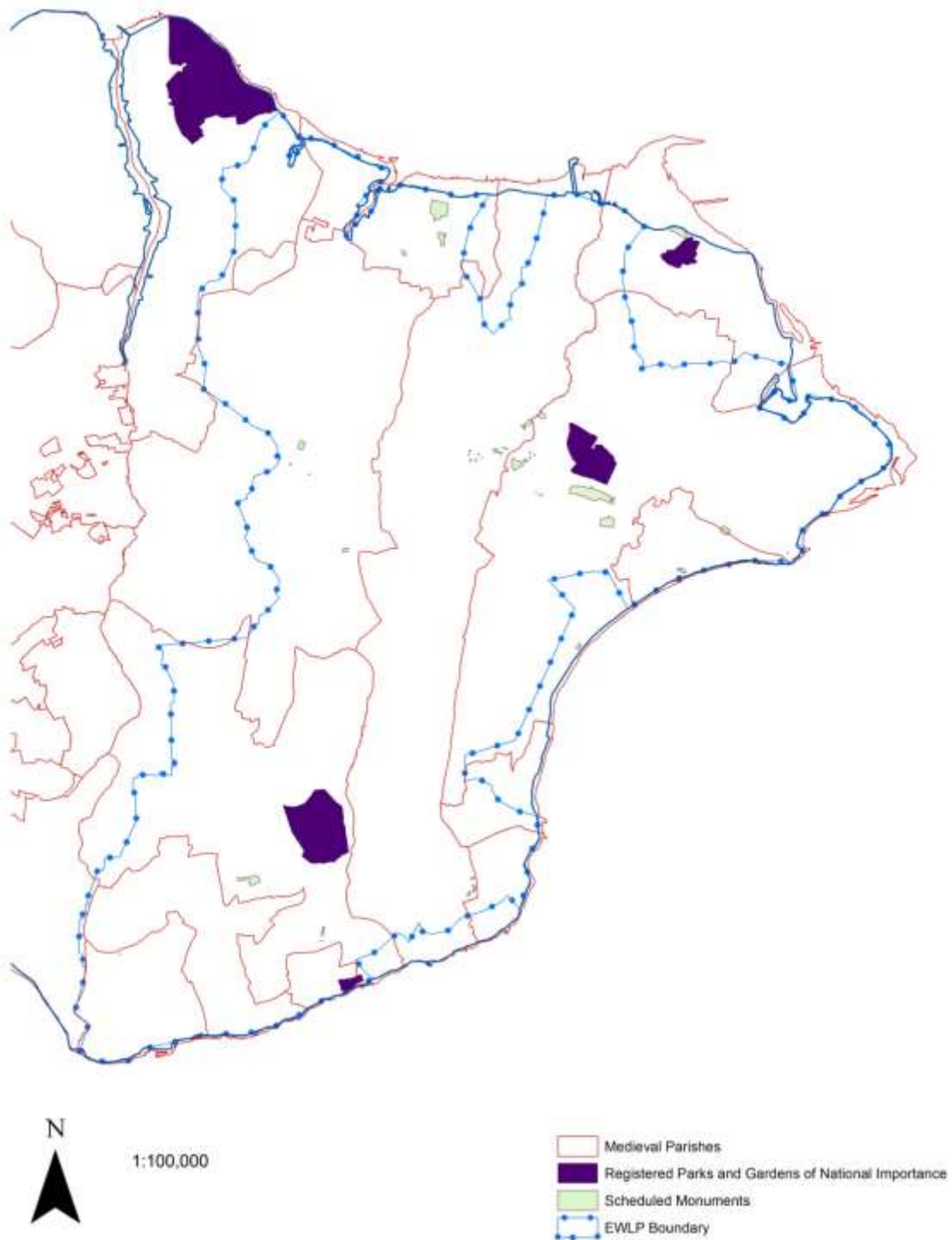
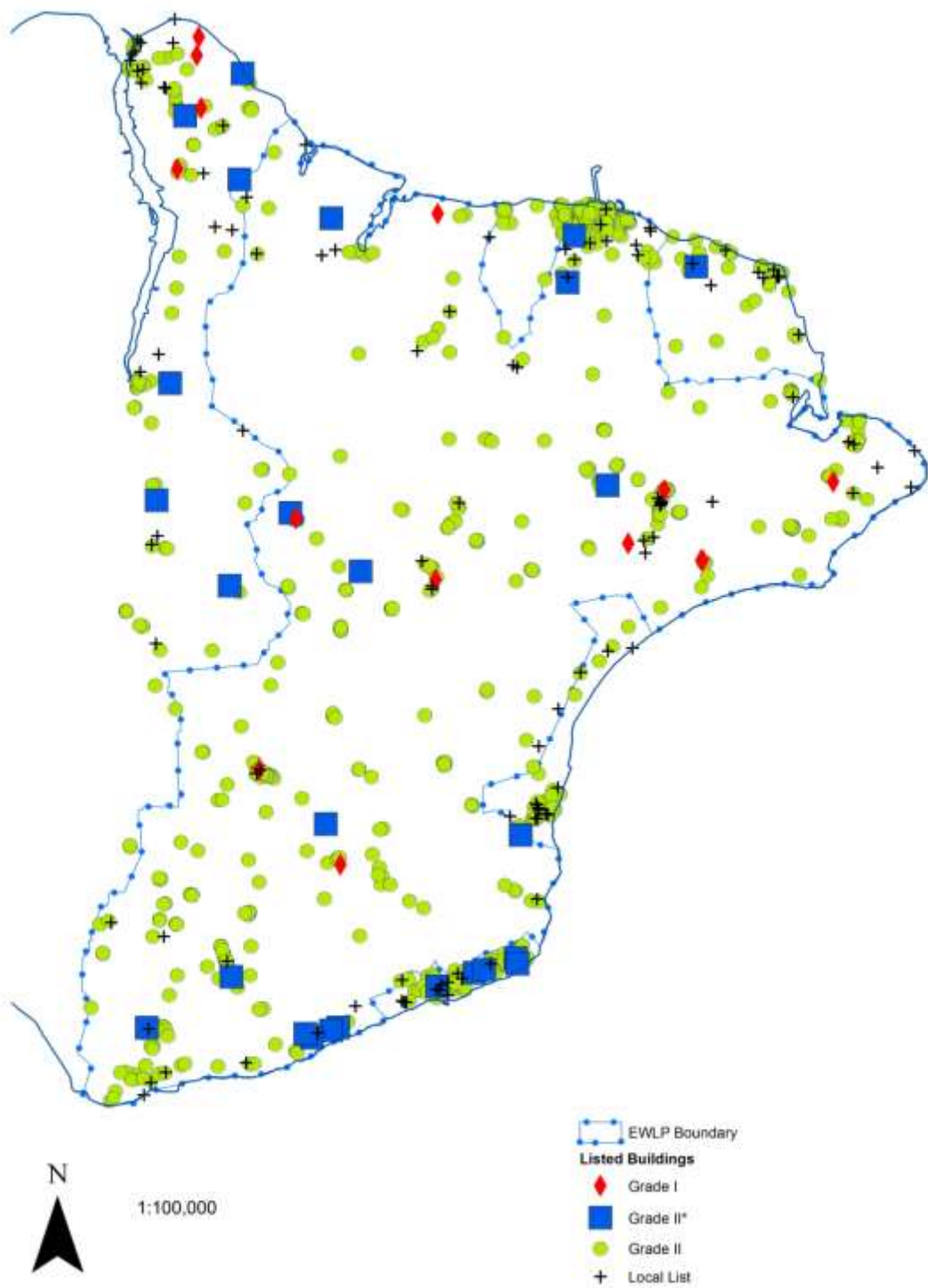


Figure 20: Medieval Parishes, Registered Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest, Scheduled Monuments



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Figure 21: Listed Buildings and Local List sites



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Figure 22: Conservation Areas



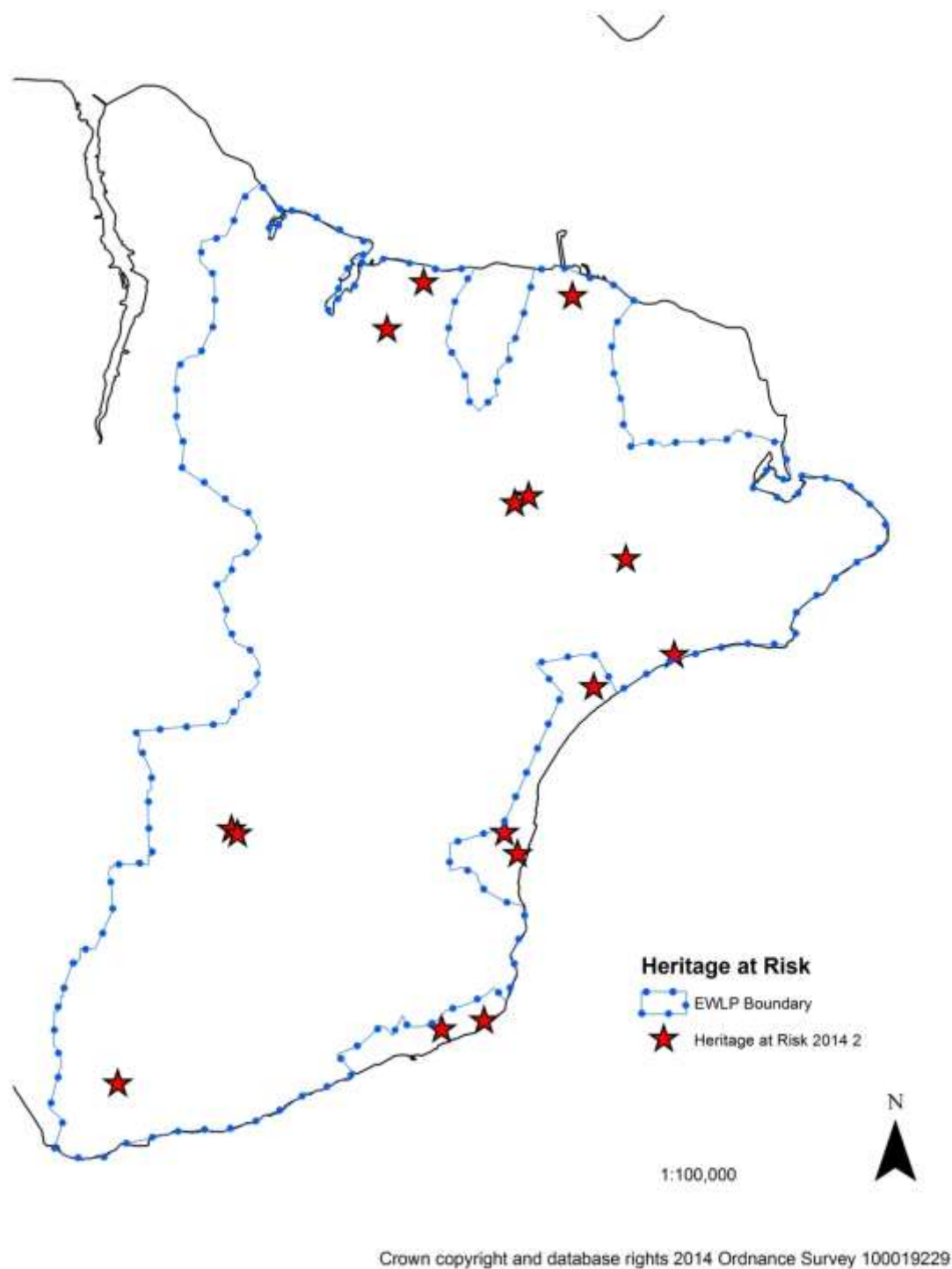


Figure 23: Heritage at Risk



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Figure 24: Historic Landscape Character Areas



## CHAPTER 6: PERCEPTIONS

The East Wight landscape has been an inspiration for as long as the area has been home to people. Ceremonial burial mounds sited in prominent position on downland are testament to this.

Landscape itself is a fairly recent concept. The modern meaning of the term is thought to be derived from the word 'landschap' coined by C16th Dutch artists seeking to represent the aesthetic value they perceived in rural and countryside scenes. It first occurs in England in around 1750 and is closely associated with the development of the 'picturesque' movement and the resulting desire to tour the country to experience beautiful sublime landscapes. This English 'Grand Tour' gave impetus to the publication of many guides to locations across the country. The Isle of Wight was no exception to this and the quality of its landscape (particularly the Undercliff) made it a very popular destination along with the Lake District.

The landscape and coastline of the East Wight have been a source of inspiration to many artists and writers particularly from the late C18th reflecting the increased interest in the picturesque. Many illustrated guide books were written in the late C18th and early C19th some examples of their descriptions are given below.

*'The harbour at Brading...the peninsula of Bimbridge (sic)...the rich woods around Nunwell, and their continuation to Wootton Bridge, above which the tower of Mr Orde's house offers its prominent feature, are all overlooked on the east and north side: while the broad and fertile vale of Newchurch and Arreton, extending to the mountainous hills of Shanklin, Wroxall, Week and St Catherine's, the steep precipices of which, on their opposite sides, bound, what is called the undercliff, court the eye to the southward.'* A Picture of the Isle of Wight Henry Penruddocke Wyndham 1793

*'Amongst these, the Isle of Wight has long famed; and must continue to hold a distinguished rank. Its beauties are so celebrated as to attract the traveller of taste from every quarter.'* A New Picture of the Isle of Wight 1808

*'The unequalled beauty of this romantic and interesting Island has rendered it an object of great attraction to all lovers of the sublime and picturesque; the variety of scenery which is scattered throughout, the interest excited by its antiquities and natural productions, together with its salubrity of climate, have concentrated the various tastes of the curious and inquisitive traveller into one focus, and the Isle of Wight is, consequently, the resort of tourists of all descriptions.'* A Companion to the Isle of Wight John Albin 1831

The beauty of the East Wight has also been captured in art and literature. George Brannon an Isle of Wight resident engraved a series of plates to illustrate in his *Vectis Scenery –being a series of original and select views , exhibiting the*

*picturesque beauties, local peculiarities, and places of particular interest in the Isle of Wight* in 1831. This includes many sketches of grand houses and gentlemen's seaside villas alongside dramatic and often exaggerated landscapes.

There are three important mid to late C18th watercolour artists who captured the Island's landscape. John Nixon, Thomas Rowlandson and Charles Tomkins. Rowlandson was a very popular artist of the Georgian period, a number of his original watercolour drawings along with those of his friends Samuel Howitt and Henry Wigstead completed on a tour in 1790s were purchased by the Isle of Wight Council with the help of the Heritage Lottery Fund.

George Brannon's *Vectis Scenery –being a series of original and select views , exhibiting the picturesque beauties, local peculiarities, and places of particular interest in the Isle of Wight* was published in 1831. This includes many sketches of grand houses and gentlemen's seaside villas alongside dramatic and artistic impressions of the area's landscapes.

J.M.W. Turner is known to have visited the Isle of Wight at least twice in 1795 and 1827 making various sketches including the Undercliff, Bonchurch and Blackgang.

The choice of Osborne by Queen Victoria and Albert Prince Consort was no doubt a major draw for others wishing to experience the beauty of the Isle of Wight so enjoyed by the Royal family.

Many literary figures are associated with or have chosen the wider East Wight as a location to live or visit and as an inspiration for their work.

John Keats (1795-1821) an English Romantic Poet lived at Eglantine Cottage (now called Keats Cottage) in Shanklin in 1817. Whilst there he wrote his poem 'On the Sea'.

*'It keeps eternal whisperings around Desolate shores, and with its mighty swell Gluts twice ten thousand Caverns, till the spell Of Hecate leaves them their old shadowy sound. Often 'tis in such gentle temper found, That scarcely will the very smallest shell Be moved for days from where it sometime fell. When last the winds of Heaven were unbound. Oh, ye! who have your eyeballs vexed and tired, Feast them upon the wideness of the Sea; Oh ye! whose ears are dinned with uproar rude, Or fed too much with cloying melody--- Sit ye near some old Cavern's Mouth and brood, Until ye start, as if the sea nymphs quired!'* John Keats 'On the Sea' 1817

Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837-1909) an English poet, playwright, and literary critic grew up at East Dene, Bonchurch and is buried in St. Boniface Church, Bonchurch. He invented the roundel form of poetry, wrote several novels and was nominated three times for the Nobel Prize for literature. He was also an inspiration to Thomas Hardy who wrote 'A Singer Asleep' whilst sitting next to his grave on a visit to Bonchurch in 1910.

*'In this fair niche above the unslumbering sea, That sentrys up and down all night, all day, From cove to promontory, from ness to bay, The Fates have fitly bidden that he should be Pillowed eternally.'* Thomas Hardy – extract 'A Singer Asleep'

Charles Dickens stayed at Winterbourne, Bonchurch in 1849 whilst writing 'David Copperfield'. Whilst there he wrote to his wife.

*'My Dear Kate,*

*I have not a moment – just got back and post going out.*

*I have taken a most delightful and beautiful house belonging to White at Bonchurch – cool, airy, private bathing, everything delicious. I think it is the prettiest place I ever saw in my life, at home or abroad.'*

The East Wight remains an inspiration today. There are many artists in the area (the Isle of Wight Open Studios brochure listing many across the area.

The recent 'Down to the Coast Artscape' provides more detail about the inspiration of the East Wight landscape on artists.





## CHAPTER 7: THE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER OF THE EAST WIGHT

### Introduction

All of the physical, natural and cultural influences previously outlined combine to give the East Wight its distinctive character. This variety can be explained through the characterisation of eleven Landscape Character Types (excluding settlement and urban areas). These are:

- Arable Farmland
- Chalk Downs
- Changed Countryside
- Coastal Designed Landscapes
- Coastal Farmland
- East Wight Woodlands
- Harbours and Creeks
- Pasture Land
- Sandstone Hills
- The Undercliff
- Valley Floor

Each of these Landscape Character Types have distinct characteristics based on similar combinations of physical and cultural influences such as landform, geology, land use, settlement pattern, wildlife habitat, historic environmental elements. Each Landscape Character Type can be further sub-divided into constituent Landscape Character Areas.

Landscape Character Areas possess common characteristics with their parent Landscape Character Type but subtle differences at a local level giving it a distinct and recognisable character.

Table I lists the various Landscape Character Types and Landscape Character Areas. The spatial location of the Landscape Character Types is shown in Figure 25. Landscape Character Areas are shown in the figures in Chapter 7.

Google Earth kmz files can be accessed via this DropBox link -

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/9ygoqlhm4mm9a2a/AAD19TmPMHWKFoSGRX7k9NJ3a?dl=0>

An online Picasa album of all photographs can be accessed at this link -

[https://picasaweb.google.com/113849979665622473800/EastWightLandscapeCharacterAssessment?authuser=0&authkey=Gv1sRgCI2lpd\\_Y48CD0wE&feat=directlink](https://picasaweb.google.com/113849979665622473800/EastWightLandscapeCharacterAssessment?authuser=0&authkey=Gv1sRgCI2lpd_Y48CD0wE&feat=directlink)

Table 1: East Wight Landscape Character Assessment - Landscape Character Types and constituent Landscape Character Areas

Character Types	Character Areas	
Arable Farmland		
	AF1	Park and Hill Arable
	AF2	Nunwell and Hardingshute Arable
	AF3	Princelett, Ninham and Landguard Arable
	AF4	Lessland, Bathingbourne and Moor Arable
	AF5	Scotland and Bridgecourt Arable
	AF6	Leechmore and Holden Arable
	AF7	Arreton, Perreton and Pagham Arable
Chalk Downs		
	CCH1	Bembridge and Culver Central Downs
	CCH2	Brading and Ashey Central Downs
	CCH3	Arreton and Mersley Central Downs
	SCH1	St Catherine's and Head Southern Downs
	SCH2	Week and Stenbury Southern Downs
	SCH3	Wroxall, Ventnor, Luccombe and Shanklin Southern Downs
Changed Countryside		
	CC1	Amenity
	CC2	Business
	CC3	Equestrian
	CC4	Horticulture
	CC5	Leisure
	CC6	Solar Farms
	CC7	Tourism
Coastal Designed Landscapes		
	CD1	Esplanades and Parades
	CD2	Marine Villas
	CD3	Public Parks
	CD4	Redeveloped Sites
Coastal Farmland		
	CF1	Yaverland Coastal Farmland

Character Types	Character Areas	
East Wight Woodlands		
	EW1	Coastal Woodland
	EW2	Northern Woodland
	EW3	Southern Woodland
Harbours and Creeks		
	HC1	King's Quay
	HC2	Wootton Creek
	HC3	Bembridge Harbour
Pasture Land		
	PL1	Bembridge Pasture
	PL2	North East Pasture
	PL3	Northern Clay Pasture
	PL4	East Yar Pasture
	PL5	Southern Downland Edge Pasture
Sandstone Hills		
	SH1	Knighton Sandstone Hills
	SH2	Bleakdown Sandstone Hills
The Undercliff		
	U1	Blackgang, Knowles and St Catherine's
	U2	Puckaster and Binnel
	U3	St Lawrence and Steephill
	U4	Bonchurch, Landslip and Luccombe
Valley Floor		
	VF1	Brading Haven and Sandown Levels
	VF2	Lower Eastern Yar
	VF3	Scotchell's Brook
	VF4	Wroxall Stream
	VF5	Middle Eastern Yar and Tributaries
	VF6	Upper Eastern Yar
	VF7	Monktonmead Brook
	VF8	Springvale

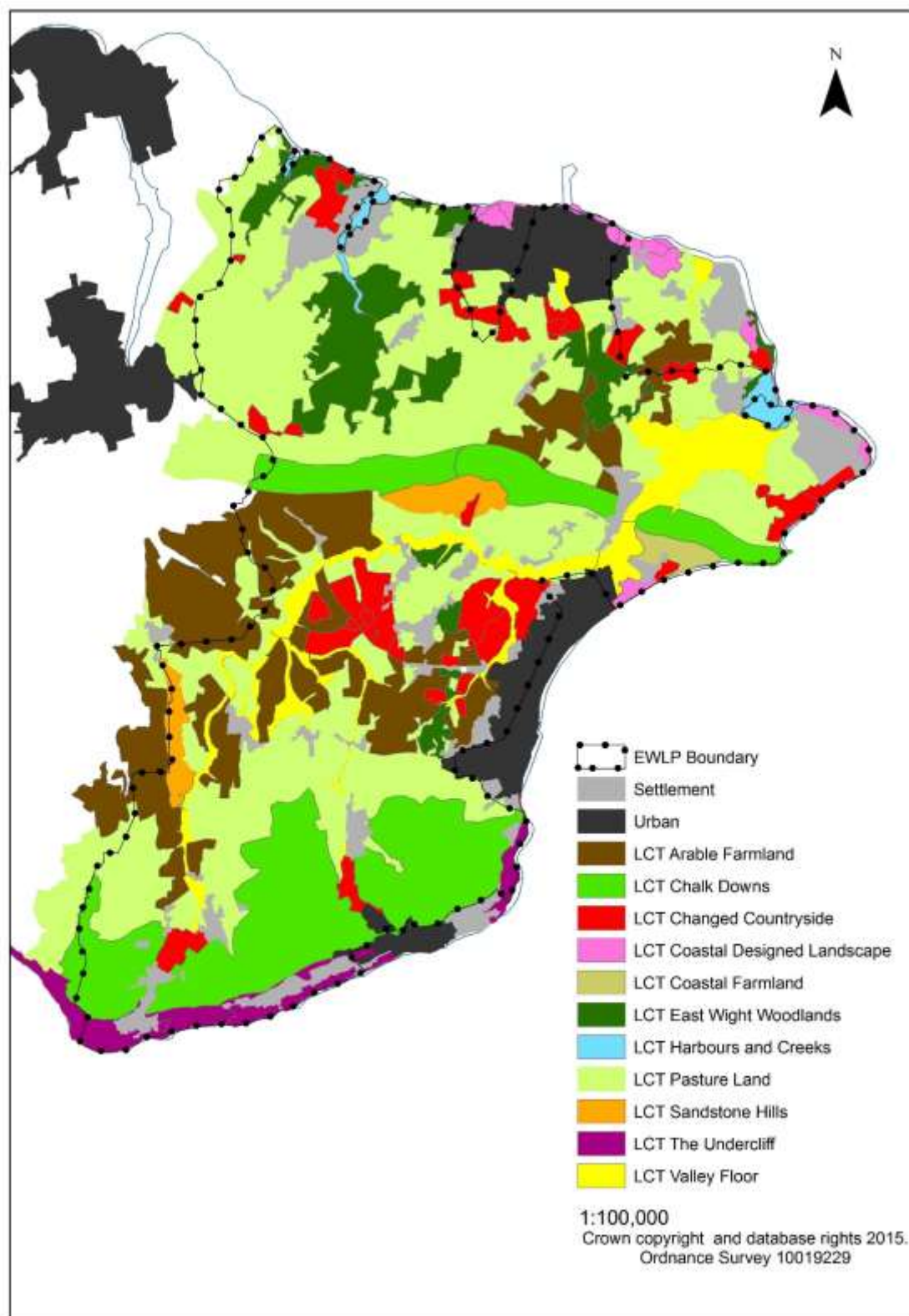


Figure 25: East Wight Landscape Character Assessment - Landscape Character Types

## LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE: ARABLE FARMLAND



Close to Scotland Farm Godshill. Note polythene strips in distance used to warm soil for early crops.



West of Godshill. Sheep grazing on field of harvested cauliflowers.



Cross field path through cereal crop close to Waightshale.



Stubble following harvest close to Perreton Farm with view across a predominantly arable landscape.

East of America Wood close to Upper Hyde Farm with St Martin's Down in background on left.



This Landscape Character Type is located on the lighter, free draining and more easily cultivated soils of the East Wight. These areas largely coincide with the Ferruginous Sands of the lowland landscape between the central and southern chalk downland areas of the East Wight. A further two areas occur in the north east of the East Wight area where ground conditions are favourable for cultivation due to either the presence of River Terrace Deposit drift geology or the influence of Bembridge Limestone Formations or Bembridge Marls which help to break up heavier clays.

A landscape of contrast and seasonal change, field sizes vary from large scale open fields to smaller arable areas often located in close proximity to wetland pasture near to the area's watercourses (particularly the Eastern Yar). Crops grown include: cereals; vegetables (cauliflowers, garlic, sweetcorn, potatoes); and seed crops (linseed and oil seed rape). Agricultural practices tend to be intensive with the use of fertilizers, herbicides and insecticides, irrigation, and for some crops the use of field polythene to encourage early growth.

The settlement of Arreton is almost entirely surrounded by this Character Type with the settlements of Rookley, Godshill, Winford, Apse Heath, Brading, Shanklin and Ashley also partly abutting it.

Significant change has taken place in this landscape. Comparison with the unpublished Ordnance Survey drawings of the late C18th (Mudge Maps) shows a significant loss of smaller fields and their associated boundary features. The Historic Landscape Characterisation indicates that many of the fields seen in today's landscape were formed as a result of amalgamation of smaller fields or reorganisation of field boundaries during the C19th and C20th. A number of fields can be described as being Prairie like due to their size being particularly large also dating from the C20th. Others exhibit characteristics of being enclosed from common, waste or green at some point in their history. In some areas where the Arable Farmland is close to woodland (such as near Borthwood, Truckells and Beaper Farm) there is evidence of the fields being assarted from woodland.

### **Key Characteristics**

- Seasonally changing landscape due to cultivation
- Larger fields often open in character particularly in the west of the area
- External field boundaries may reflect historic field patterns and are often enclosed with fairly well maintained hedgerows
- There are few hedgerow trees in the Arable Farmland between the central and southern chalk downland areas
- Hedgerow trees and field trees are more prevalent in the Arable Farmland north of the central chalk downs along with small pockets of woodland
- Strongly rural in character there is little built development other than historic farmsteads and manor houses and occasional modern farm buildings. The

historic core of Arreton falls within this Character Type as does part of the Arreton Conservation Area. The former parkland at Nunwell is also partly located in this character type.



Near Merstone, early crops under polythene.



Large 'prairie like' arable fields between Apse Castle and Canteen Road.



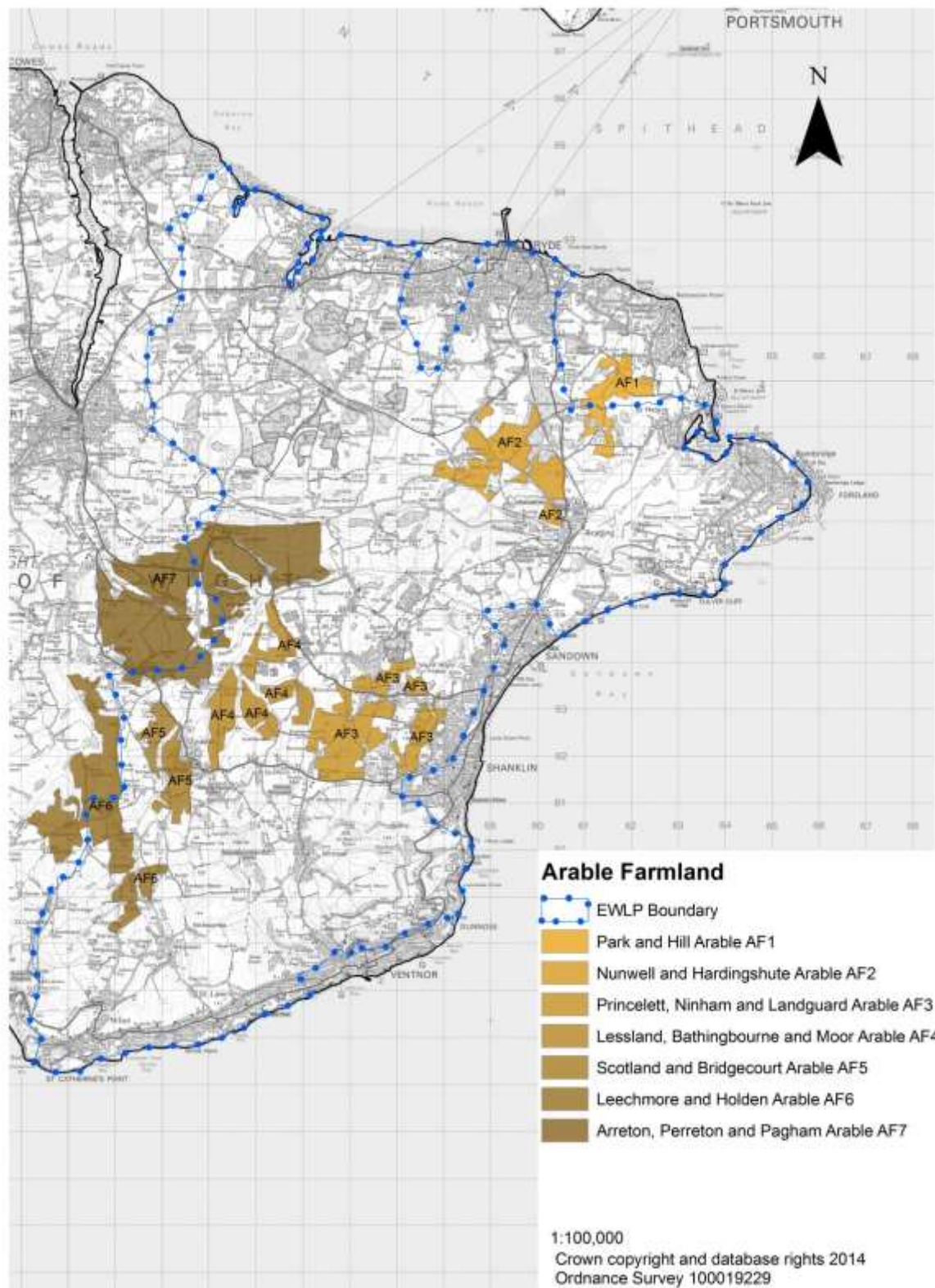
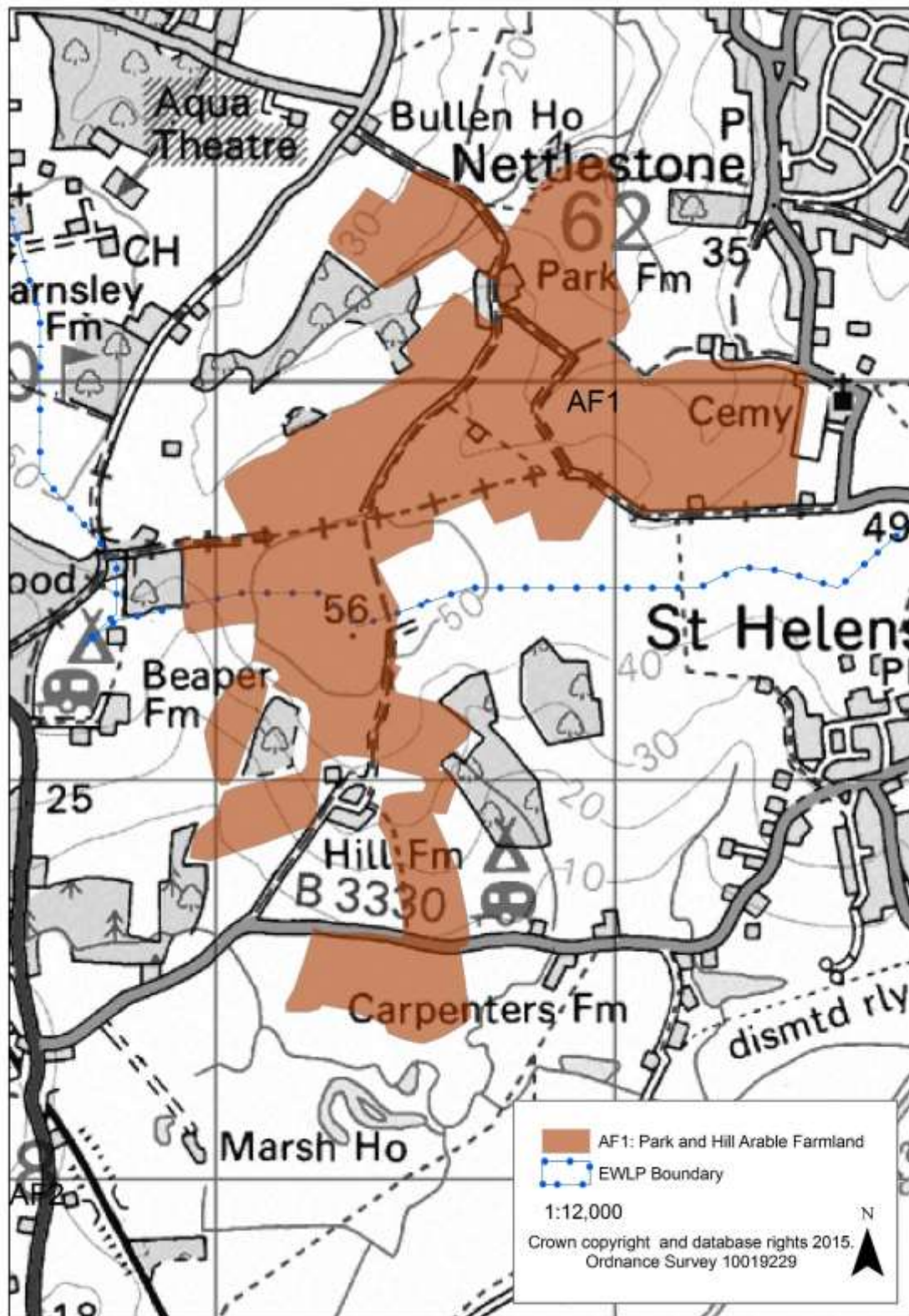


Figure 26: Arable Farmland Landscape Character Areas



## CHARACTER AREA AF1: PARK AND HILL ARABLE





## **Location and description**

Located in the north east of the East Wight close to Park Farm and Hill Farm within Nettlestone & Seaview and Brading Civil Parishes, this character area sees a geology of River Terrace Deposits overlaying Bembridge Marls at an elevation of between <5 metres to around 50 metres above Ordnance Datum. The influence of the drift geology and more alkali conditions of the Bembridge Marls make the soil more easily worked than in the adjacent claylands.

The Historic Landscape Characterisation indicates that significant change to field patterns took place in this area in the C19th and C20th with the amalgamation and reorganisation of fields. There is also evidence of fields in the west of the character area being assarted from woodland close to Beaper Farm. In the north of the area it would seem that fields were created from the enclosure of common, waste of green.

Many of the field boundaries and trackways seen in this area today are also shown on late C18th maps. Boundaries are often hedged and in some locations include hedgerow trees or wider bands of woodland. The area falls within the medieval parish of Brading with the boundary with St Helens forming part of its northern edge.

The LCA falls within the Brading Haven and Bembridge Isle Historic Landscape Character Area and the Northern Lowlands Historic Landscape Character Area.

The area is largely unsettled.

Spring Copse is an Ancient Woodland and also a Site of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINC) on the very edge of this LCA.

The south of this LCA is close to the valley floor of the Eastern Yar and falls within the Eastern Yar Valley Biodiversity Opportunity Area offering potential for wetland management, wetland habitat restoration of particular benefit to wetland bird species.

Arable cultivation of cereal crops is the predominant land use in this character area.

Environmental Stewardship at Entry and Higher Level has delivered environmental benefits on parts of this character area close to Hill Farm.

Access in this landscape is limited to the fairly dispersed public rights of way network.

## **Key Characteristics**

- Strong rural character
- Open arable fields
- A cultivated landscape that changes with the seasons
- Important remaining boundary hedgerows many with hedgerow trees

- Low lying arable fields in the south of the area and their potential wetland importance

### **Past forces for change**

- Loss of woodland through assarting
- Enclosure of waste/common/green
- Alteration of historic field patterns particularly in the C19th and C20th with loss of many internal boundaries
- Intensification of agricultural production and practices particularly in the latter part of the C20th
- Environmental Stewardship funding for environmental management of farmland for nature conservation, landscape and historic environmental benefit

### **Future forces for change**

- Changes to farm gate prices and agricultural commodity markets
- Changes to the European Agricultural Funds for Rural Development and European funded farm subsidies
- Climate change impacts
- Benefits from continued investment through Environmental Stewardship

### **Condition and Character**

The overall condition of the features of this character area is judged to be **good** and its overall character is judged to be **moderate**.

### **Sensitivities**

- Remaining hedgerows and hedgerow trees particularly where these have a strong relationship with historic boundaries
- Habitats conserved or enhanced through Higher Level Stewardship funding
- Soil maintenance and diffuse pollution control (Catchment Sensitive Farming)

### **Landscape Strategy**

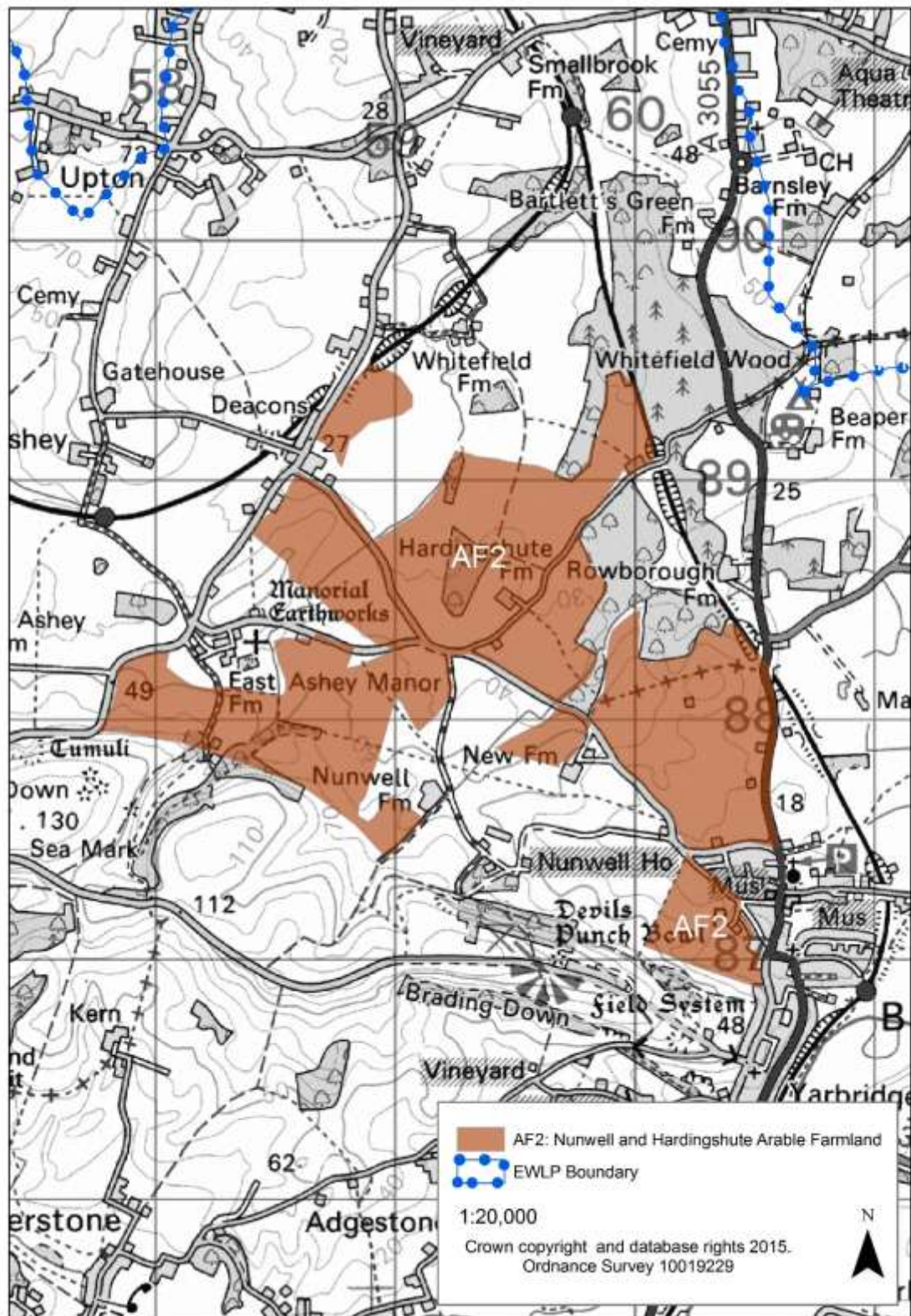
- Conserve and where possible enhance the character and inherent qualities of this character area. These include remaining hedgerows and hedgerow trees, areas which have seen investment through Environmental Stewardship, and wetland arable fields in the south of the area close to the Eastern Yar.

### **Landscape Guidelines**

- Conserve and where possible enhance the ecological interest of this cultivated farmland landscape
- Encourage the sensitive management of hedgerows and hedgerow trees



## CHARACTER AREA AF2: NUNWELL AND HARDINGSHUTE ARABLE



## Location and description

This Character Area is located north of the central chalk downland ridge. It ranges from Asheys in the West to the edge of the town of Brading in the east and from the base of Brading and Asheys Downs in the south to Whitefield Woods in the north east and Green Lane in the north west. The area falls within the civil parishes of Havenstreet & Asheys and Brading.

Its geology includes Hamstead Beds, Bembridge Limestone, Bembridge Marls, Headon and Osborne Beds, and narrow bands of other clays. Elevation varies from around 20 metres above Ordnance Datum in the north of the area up to around 80 metres above Ordnance Datum close to the base of the chalk downland in the south. The soils are influenced by water runoff from the steep downland to the south and the underlying limestone deposits helping to break up the heavier clays aiding the area's cultivation.

The Historic Landscape Characterisation indicates that there has been significant change to the field patterns in this area in the C19th and C20th with the loss of many smaller fields through amalgamation and reorganisation of field patterns. This is particularly the case around Hardingshute and East Asheys. There are also arable fields close to Nunwell which have been created from the enclosure of parkland in the C20th. The former parkland trees have been retained as field trees now in an arable setting. In the north east of the area, close to Truckells, there is evidence of arable fields having been assarted from woodland probably in the Medieval period. The area falls within the medieval parishes of Newchurch and Brading.

Part of the nationally Registered Park and Garden of special historic interest at Nunwell falls within this character area (one of the fields taken out of the parkland referred to above). Nunwell House itself and the bulk of the parkland is in the adjacent PL3 Northern Clay Pasture Character Area. There are few buildings in the area. A small cluster at Hardingshute include: Hardingshute Farmhouse (Grade II listed) and its associated historic farm buildings including a Granary (Grade II listed) and Barn (Grade II listed). Close to the town of Brading there is a property called Little Park an early C18th vernacular farmhouse (Grade II listed). A small part of the Brading Conservation Area is also located in the south west of the area.

The LCA falls within the Northern Lowlands Historic Landscape Character Area.

The southern part of this character area close to the downland falls within the Isle of Wight AONB.

A small area of ancient woodland called Broadley Copse is within this character area being completely surrounded by arable fields this is also a Site of Special Scientific

Interest (SINC). Another small area of ancient woodland is found on the southern edge of the area at Bloodstone Copse. This woodland along with its neighbour Eaglehead Copse (outside of this character area) are also a nationally designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Nunwell Park is a SINC local recognition of its importance as an historic parkland. A small part of the Ashey Down SINC falls within the LCA. The south of the area falls within the Eastern Central Ridge Biodiversity Opportunity Area important for its transition to chalk downland habitats. 75% of the character area has benefited from Environmental Stewardship as part of the higher level scheme.

The National Forest Inventory indicates a small area of new woodland planting close to Kelly's Copse.

Arable cultivation of cereal crops is the predominant land use in this character area.

Access is limited to public rights of way which pass through the area

### **Key Characteristics**

- Strong rural character
- Open arable fields
- Field trees associated with former parkland at Nunwell
- A cultivated landscape that changes with the seasons
- Hedged field boundaries many of which are historic in character and contain hedgerow trees
- Ancient woodland areas of historic, landscape and environmental value

### **Past forces for change**

- Alteration of historic field patterns particularly in the C19th and C20th with loss of many internal boundaries and small areas of parkland
- Intensification of agricultural production and practices particularly in the latter part of the C20th
- Environmental Stewardship funding for environmental management of farmland for nature conservation, landscape and historic environmental benefit

### **Future forces for change**

- Changes to farm gate prices and agricultural commodity markets
- Changes to the European Agricultural Funds for Rural Development and European funded farm subsidies
- Climate change impacts
- Benefits from continued investment through environmental stewardship

- Loss of veteran field trees

### **Condition and Character**

The overall condition of the features of this character area is judged to be **good** and its character is judged to be **strong**.

### **Sensitivities**

- Remaining hedgerows and hedgerow trees particularly where these have a strong relationship with historic boundaries
- Field trees an important record of former parkland
- Habitats conserved or enhanced through Higher Level Stewardship funding

### **Landscape Strategy**

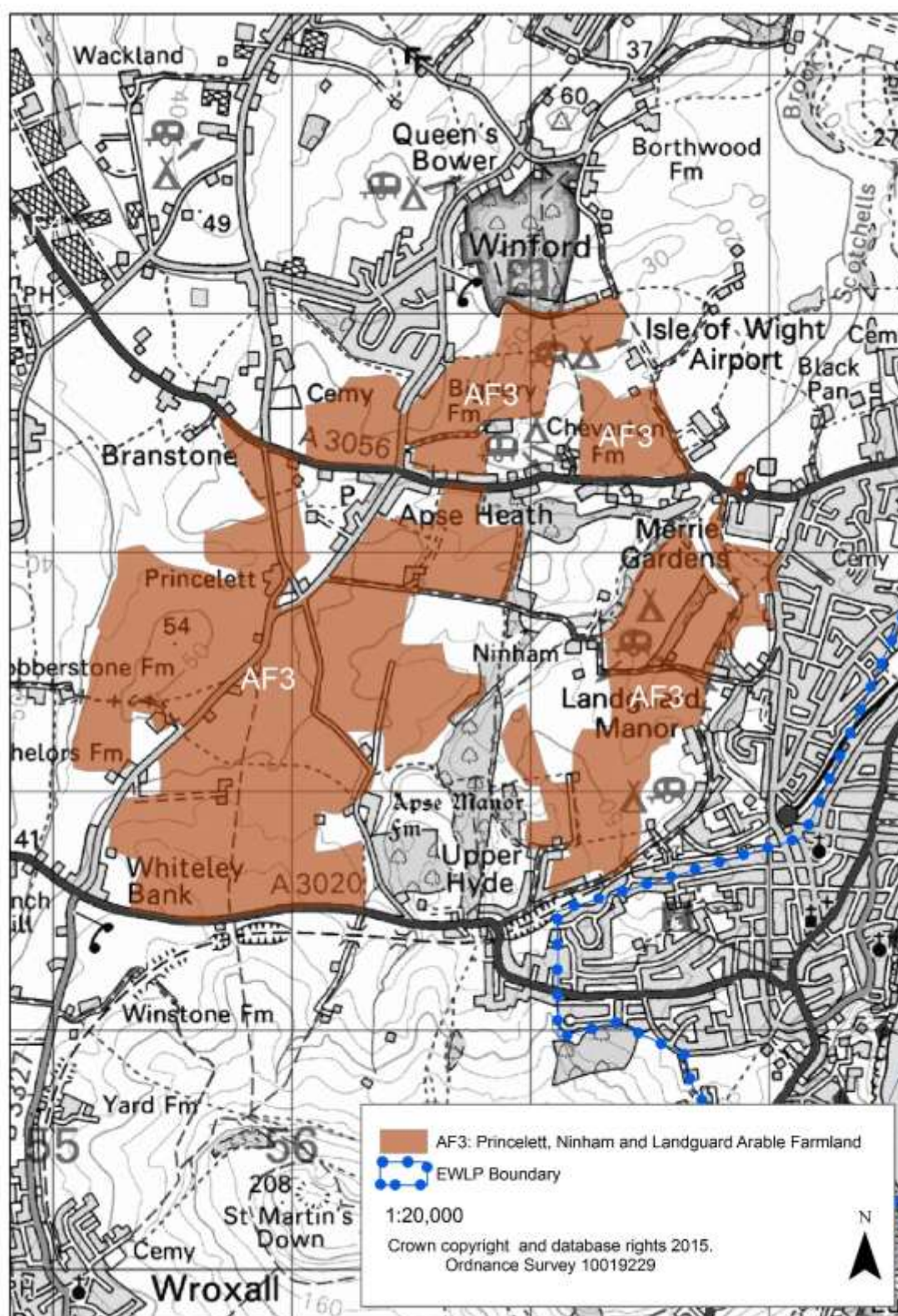
- Conserve and where possible enhance the character and inherent qualities of this character area. These include remaining hedgerows, hedgerow trees, field trees areas which have seen investment through Environmental Stewardship, and ancient woodland areas.

### **Landscape Guidelines**

- Conserve and where possible enhance the ecological interest of this cultivated farmland landscape
- Encourage the sensitive management and retention of hedgerows, hedgerow trees and field trees
- Conserve remaining ancient woodland areas



CHARACTER AREA AF3: PRINCELETT, NINHAM AND LANDGUARD  
ARABLE



## Location and description

This character area is located in the south east of the East Wight. It ranges from Bobberstone in the west to the edge of the urban area of Shanklin and Lake in the east and from the main road between Shanklin and Godshill (A3020) in the south to Borthwood in the north. The area falls within the Shanklin and Newchurch civil parishes.

The underlying geology is mainly Ferruginous Sands giving way to Sandrock formation in the south of the area as the land rises up towards the downs. Elevation ranges from <20 metres above Ordnance Datum near to the valley floor to 80 metres above Ordnance Datum close to the downs.

Hedgerow trees are scarce in most of the area with the exception of close to Borthwood Copse in the north and Scotchell's Brook in the east. Trees also follow the line of old trackways and stream lines such as that close to Rill Farm.

A well cultivated landscape, this area changes with the seasons and the farming year. The Historic Landscape Characterisation indicates that the fields that we see today have been formed from the amalgamation and re-organisation of smaller fields during the C19th and C20th. Between Apse Manor and Canteen one large area displays prairie like character being very open, flat and expansive. Boundaries tend to be marked by ditches and hedgerows. Many of the hedgerows that remain can be also be seen on the unpublished Ordnance Survey maps of the late C18th. The area falls within the Brading and Newchurch Medieval parishes and in a number of locations the character area edge coincides with these historic boundaries.

Settlement is sparse consisting of a few scattered farmsteads such as Rill Farm and Bachelors Farm. Old Princelett Farmhouse is Grade II listed.

Parts of the Newchurch Environs and Sandown Bay Historic Landscape Character Area and Arreton Valley Historic Landscape Character Area are found within this LCA.

The eastern edge of the area where it is close to Scotchell's Brook is within the Eastern Yar Valley Biodiversity Opportunity Area. Also in this part of the area there are three Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation: Old Clover Withybed, Ninham/Barton Withy Bed and Landguard Manor Farm Copse.

Around 55 % of the character area has benefited from Environmental Stewardship as part of the entry level with higher level scheme.

Access in the area is afforded by public rights of way.

## Key Characteristics

- Large open and expansive arable fields
- Changing colours and textures with the seasons and farming year
- Hedgerows mark remaining field boundaries many of which may have historic origins
- Hedgerow trees are scarce except close to the valley floor or near to areas of woodland
- A largely unsettled landscape with a few scattered farmsteads

## Past forces for change

- Alteration of historic field patterns particularly in the C19th and C20th with loss of many internal boundaries
- Intensification of agricultural production and practices particularly in the latter part of the C20th
- Environmental Stewardship funding for environmental management of farmland for nature conservation, landscape and historic environmental benefit

## Future forces for change

- Changes to farm gate prices and agricultural commodity markets
- Changes to the European Agricultural Funds for Rural Development and European funded farm subsidies
- Climate change impacts
- Benefits from continued investment through Environmental Stewardship

## Condition and Character

The overall condition of the features of this character area is judged to be **good** and the character of the area is judged to be **moderate**.

## Sensitivities

- Remaining hedgerows and hedgerow trees particularly where these have a strong relationship with historic boundaries
- Habitats conserved or enhanced through Higher Level Stewardship funding
- Adjacent priority habitats of wet woodland and neutral grassland

## Landscape Strategy

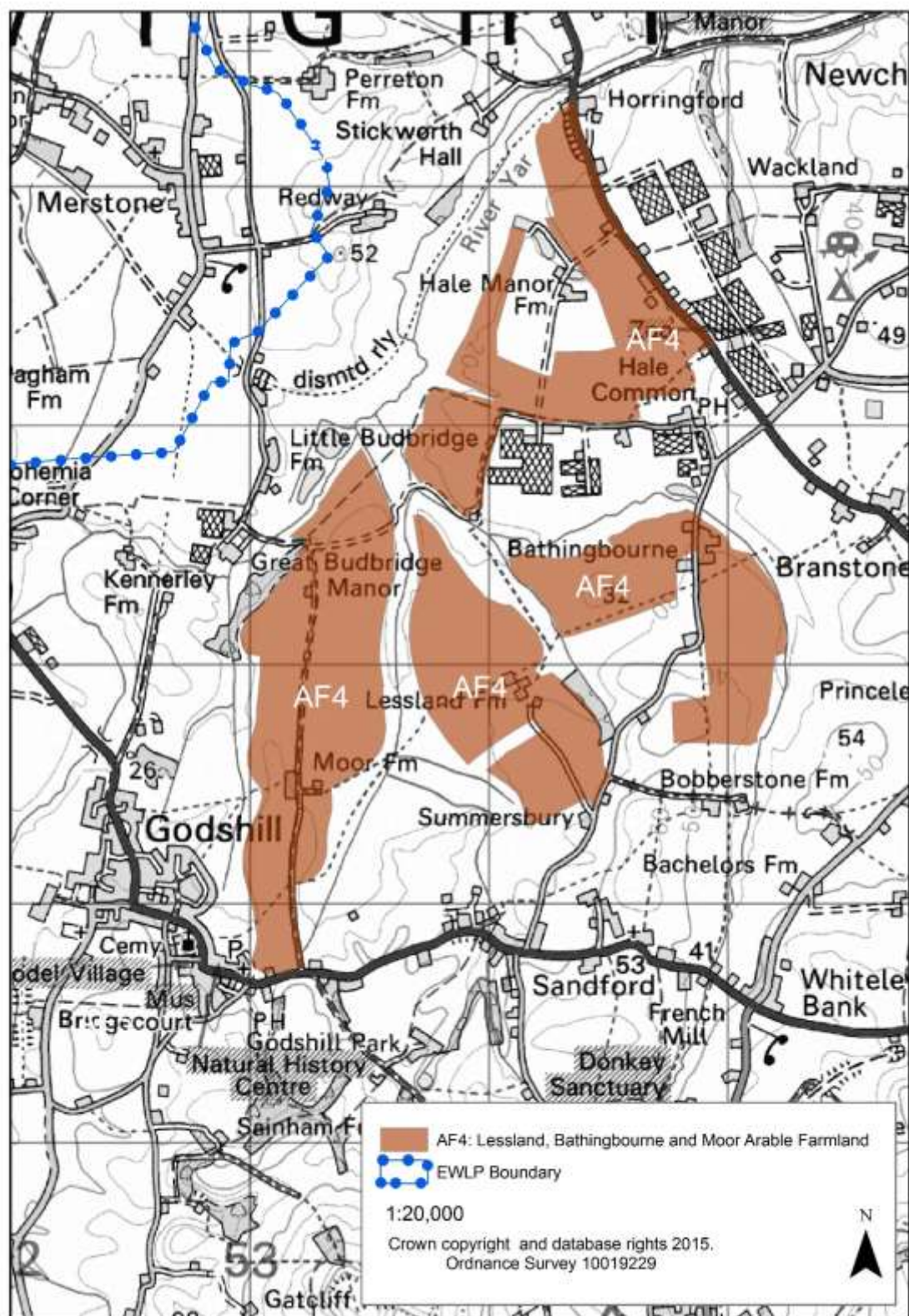
- Conserve and where possible enhance the character and inherent qualities of this character area. These include remaining hedgerows, hedgerow trees and areas which have seen investment through Environmental Stewardship.

## **Landscape Guidelines**

- Conserve and where possible enhance the ecological interest of this cultivated farmland landscape
- Encourage the sensitive management and retention of hedgerows and hedgerow trees
- Encourage catchment sensitive farming approaches for the benefits this brings to adjacent watercourses



CHARACTER AREA AF4: LESSLAND, BATHINGBOURNE AND MOOR ARABLE



## **Location and description**

This Landscape Character Area ranges from Hale Common in the north to Godshill in the south. It falls within the civil parishes of Arreton and Rookley. It includes a series of blocks of arable farmland which lie between the tributaries of the Eastern Yar.

The bedrock geology of the area is predominantly Ferruginous Sands with a small area of Sandrock Formation. This is overlain with River Terrace, Alluvium and Peat deposits. Elevation ranges from 20 metres to around 50 metres above Ordnance Datum.

A well cultivated landscape the Historic Landscape Characterisation indicates significant change to field patterns from the amalgamation of smaller fields into larger ones and the establishment of very large prairie like fields in the C19th and C20th. There are also areas enclosed from waste, common or green during the post medieval, C18th and C19th. The LCA falls within the Arreton Valley Historic Landscape Character Area.

This Landscape Character Area (LCA) falls within the medieval parishes of Godshill and Arreton with parts of the eastern edge of the LCA being the boundary between Godshill and Newchurch medieval parishes.

A largely unsettled landscape with dispersed farmsteads. Lessland Farmhouse and its former Hackney horse stable are both Grade II listed. There has been a very small amount of woodland planting in the area since the 1990s.

Parts of this area fall within the Eastern Yar Valley Biodiversity Opportunity Area, indicating its potential for wetland management.

Around 60% of the area is benefitting from Environmental Stewardship at both entry and higher level.

## **Key Characteristics**

- Large open and expansive arable fields
- Changing colours and textures with the seasons and farming year
- Hedgerows mark remaining external field boundaries many of which may have historic origins
- A largely unsettled landscape with a few scattered farmsteads

## **Past forces for change**

- Alteration of historic field patterns particularly in the C19th and C20th with loss of many internal boundaries
- Intensification of agricultural production and practices particularly in the latter part of the C20th

- Environmental Stewardship funding for environmental management of farmland for nature conservation, landscape and historic environmental benefit

### **Future forces for change**

- Changes to farm gate prices and agricultural commodity markets
- Changes to the European Agricultural Funds for Rural Development and European funded farm subsidies
- Climate change impacts
- Benefits from continued investment through Environmental Stewardship

### **Condition and Character**

The overall condition of the features of this character area is judged to be **good** and the character is judged to be **moderate**.

### **Sensitivities**

- Remaining hedgerows and hedgerow trees particularly where these have a strong relationship with historic boundaries
- Habitats conserved or enhanced through Higher Level Stewardship funding
- Soil maintenance and diffuse pollution control (Catchment Sensitive Farming)

### **Landscape Strategy**

- Conserve and where possible enhance the character and inherent qualities of this character area. These include remaining hedgerows, areas which have seen investment through Environmental Stewardship, and wetland arable fields in the close to the Eastern Yar Valley.

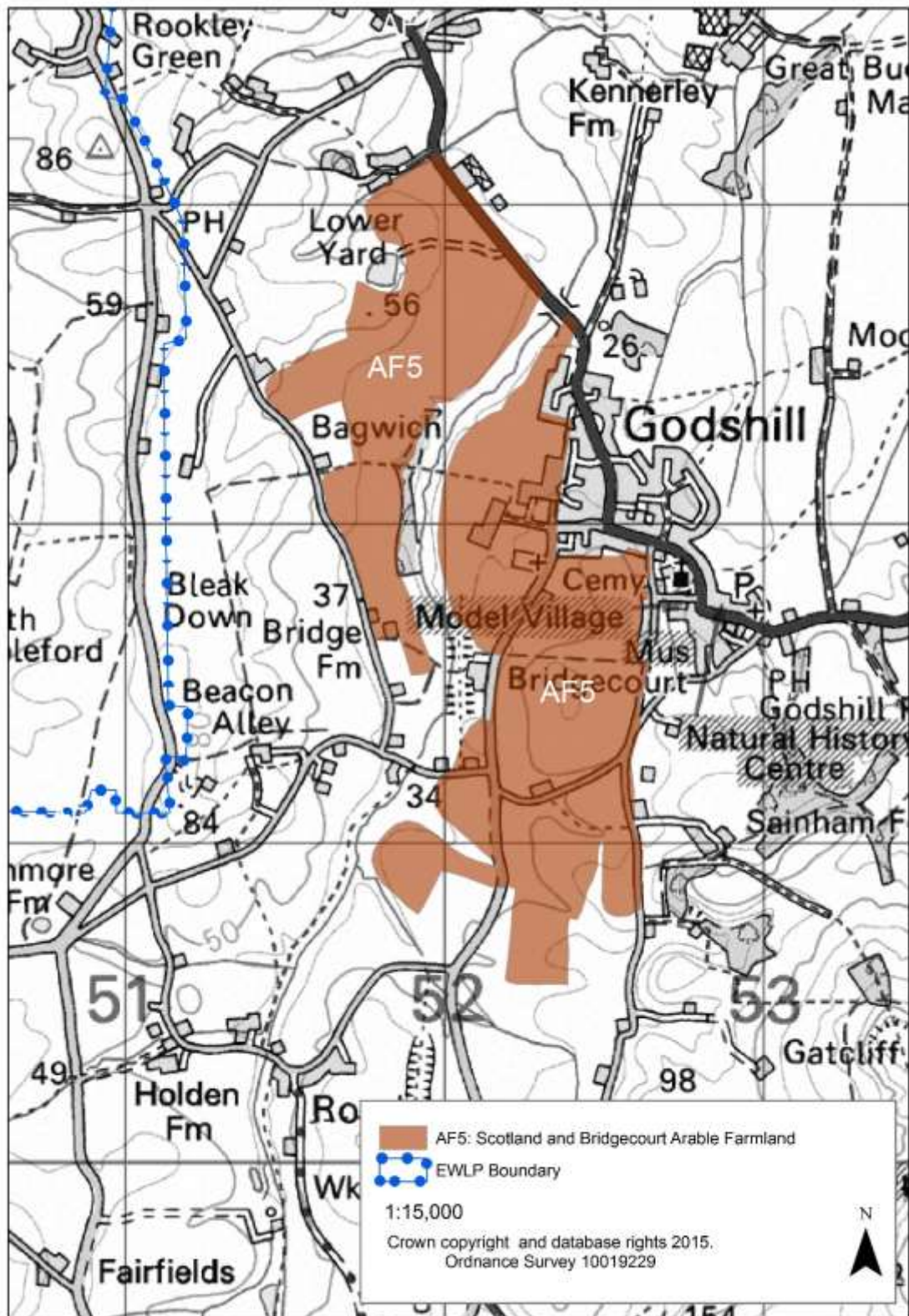
### **Landscape Guidelines**

- Conserve and where possible enhance the ecological interest of this cultivated farmland landscape
- Encourage the sensitive management of hedgerows





## CHARACTER AREA AF5: SCOTLAND AND BRIDGECOURT ARABLE



## **Location and description**

This character area is located close to the village of Godshill and falls within Godshill civil parish. It ranges from Godshill in the east to Bagwich Lane in the west and from Lake Farm in the north to south of Merryl Lane in the south.

The solid geology of the area is predominantly Ferruginous Sands with a small area of Sandrock Formation in the south of the area, this is overlain in some areas by River Terrace and Alluvium drift deposits. Elevation varies from 30 metres to 60 metres above Ordnance Datum.

The Historic Landscape Characterisation indicates significant change to field patterns in this area during the C19th and C20th through amalgamation, re-organisation and establishment of prairie like fields. There are some small areas of enclosure from pasture, meadow or of an unidentified type dating from the post medieval period. The area is largely unsettled with the exception of Scotland Farm and a few isolated rural properties. There are no listed buildings in the area. The very east of the area falls within the Godshill Conservation Area. The whole of the area falls within the Godshill medieval parish and South Wight Sandstone and Gravel Historic Landscape Character Area.

A cultivated landscape changing with the seasons. Crops include vegetables and cereals. Around 15% of the area has benefitted from Environmental Stewardship at entry level.

Part of the area falls within the Eastern Yar Valley Biodiversity Opportunity Area, indicating its potential for wetland management in areas close to the Eastern Yar valley floor. The Upper Yar Valley Site of Interest for Nature Conservation is on the very edge of the area.

Access through the area is provided by the public rights of way network

## **Key Characteristics**

- Strong rural character
- Open arable fields
- Hedgerows mark field boundaries many of which are historic in character with some also containing hedgerow trees
- A cultivated landscape that changes with the seasons

## **Past forces for change**

- Alteration of historic field patterns particularly in the C19th and C20th with loss of many internal boundaries
- Intensification of agricultural production and practices particularly in the latter part of the C20th

- Environmental Stewardship funding for environmental management of farmland for nature conservation, landscape and historic environmental benefit

### **Future forces for change**

- Changes to farm gate prices and agricultural commodity markets
- Changes to the European Agricultural Funds for Rural Development and European funded farm subsidies
- Climate change impacts
- Benefits from continued investment through Environmental Stewardship

### **Condition and Character**

The condition of the features of this character area is judged to be **good** and the character is judged to be **moderate**.

### **Sensitivities**

- Remaining hedgerows and any hedgerow trees particularly where these have a strong relationship with historic boundaries
- Habitats conserved or enhanced through Higher Level Stewardship funding
- Wetlands on the margins of the area and the impact of farming practices on these

### **Landscape Strategy**

- Conserve and where possible enhance the character and inherent qualities of this character area. These include remaining hedgerows, hedgerow trees and areas which have seen investment through Environmental Stewardship, and ancient woodland areas.

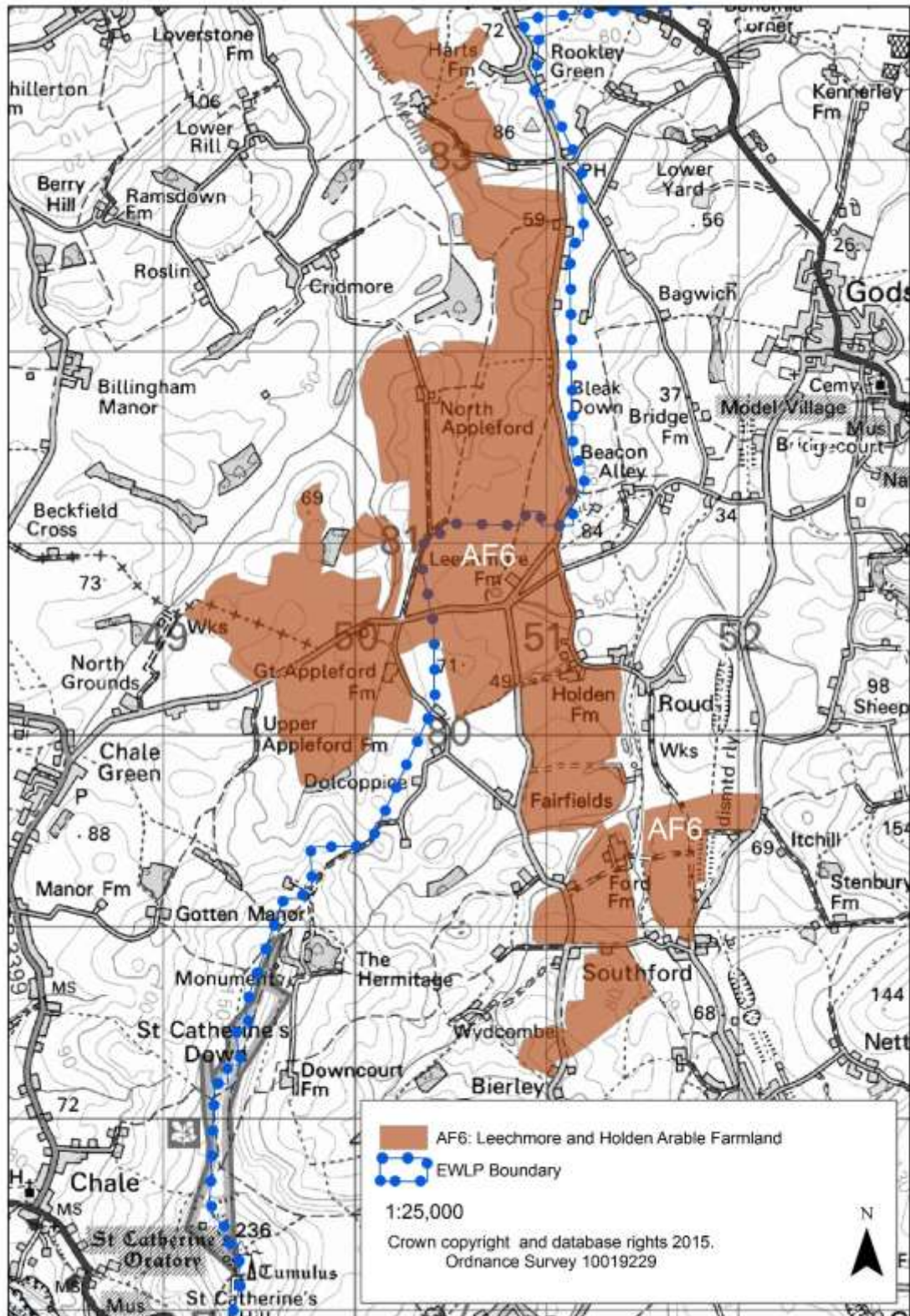
### **Landscape Guidelines**

- Conserve and where possible enhance the ecological interest of this cultivated farmland landscape
- Encourage the sensitive management and retention of hedgerows, and hedgerow trees





## CHARACTER AREA AF6: LEECHMORE AND HOLDEN ARABLE





## **Location and description**

Located in the south west of the East Wight area this character type extends from south of the village of Rookley in the north to Bierley in the south; and from Appleford Road in the west to Bleak Down and Roud in the east. It crosses a number of civil parishes including: Chale; Niton & Whitwell; Godshill and Rookley.

Underlying geology includes Carstone, Sandstone Formation, Gault and Ferruginous Sands with some areas of Alluvium, Peat and River Terrace drift deposits. Elevation ranges from 40 metres to 100 metres above Ordnance Datum.

The Historic Landscape Characterisation indicates significant change to field patterns in this area, particularly in the C19th and C20th with enclosure of heathland, amalgamation of fields, and establishment of prairie like fields. There is also evidence of enclosure of open field strips and enclosure of waste, common or green during the medieval period and enclosure of open field strips/open field furlongs during the post medieval period. The character area falls within the South Wight Sandstone and Gravel and South Wight Downland Edge Historic Landscape Character Areas.

The area falls within the medieval parishes of Chale, Whitwell and Godshill. A largely unsettled landscape with a few isolated rural cottages and farmsteads, including the following listed buildings: Ford Mill House Grade II; Pigsties at Ford Mill Grade II; Barn north of Ford Mill Grade II; Great Appleford Grade II; Barn at Great Appleford Grade II.

The west of the area is within the Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

A cultivated landscape changing with the seasons. Field boundaries are usually defined by hedgerows and in a few places these include hedgerow trees. External boundaries of the area are largely consistent with those seen on the late C18th Unpublished Ordnance Survey maps but many internal boundaries have gone due to field pattern changes. Around 65% of the area is benefitting from Environmental Stewardship at both entry and higher levels.

Part of the area falls within the Eastern Yar Valley Biodiversity Opportunity Area, indicating its potential for wetland management. Some small areas of woodland planting has taken place around some edges of the area.

Access is limited to public rights of way through the area.

## **Key Characteristics**

- Large open and expansive arable fields
- Changing colours and textures with the seasons and farming year
- Hedgerows mark remaining field boundaries many of which may have historic origins

- Hedgerow trees are found in a few areas
- A largely unsettled landscape with a few scattered farmsteads and rural cottages

### **Past forces for change**

- Alteration of historic field patterns particularly in the C19th and C20th with loss of many internal boundaries
- Intensification of agricultural production and practices particularly in the latter part of the C20th
- Environmental Stewardship funding for environmental management of farmland for nature conservation, landscape and historic environmental benefit

### **Future forces for change**

- Future changes to farm gate prices and agricultural commodity markets
- Changes to the European Agricultural Funds for Rural Development and European funded farm subsidies
- Climate change impacts
- Benefits from continued investment through Environmental Stewardship

### **Condition and Character**

The overall condition of the features of this character area is judged to be **good** and the character of the area is judged to be **moderate**.

### **Sensitivities**

- Remaining hedgerows and any hedgerow trees particularly where these have a strong relationship with historic boundaries
- Habitats conserved or enhanced through Environmental Stewardship funding

### **Landscape Strategy**

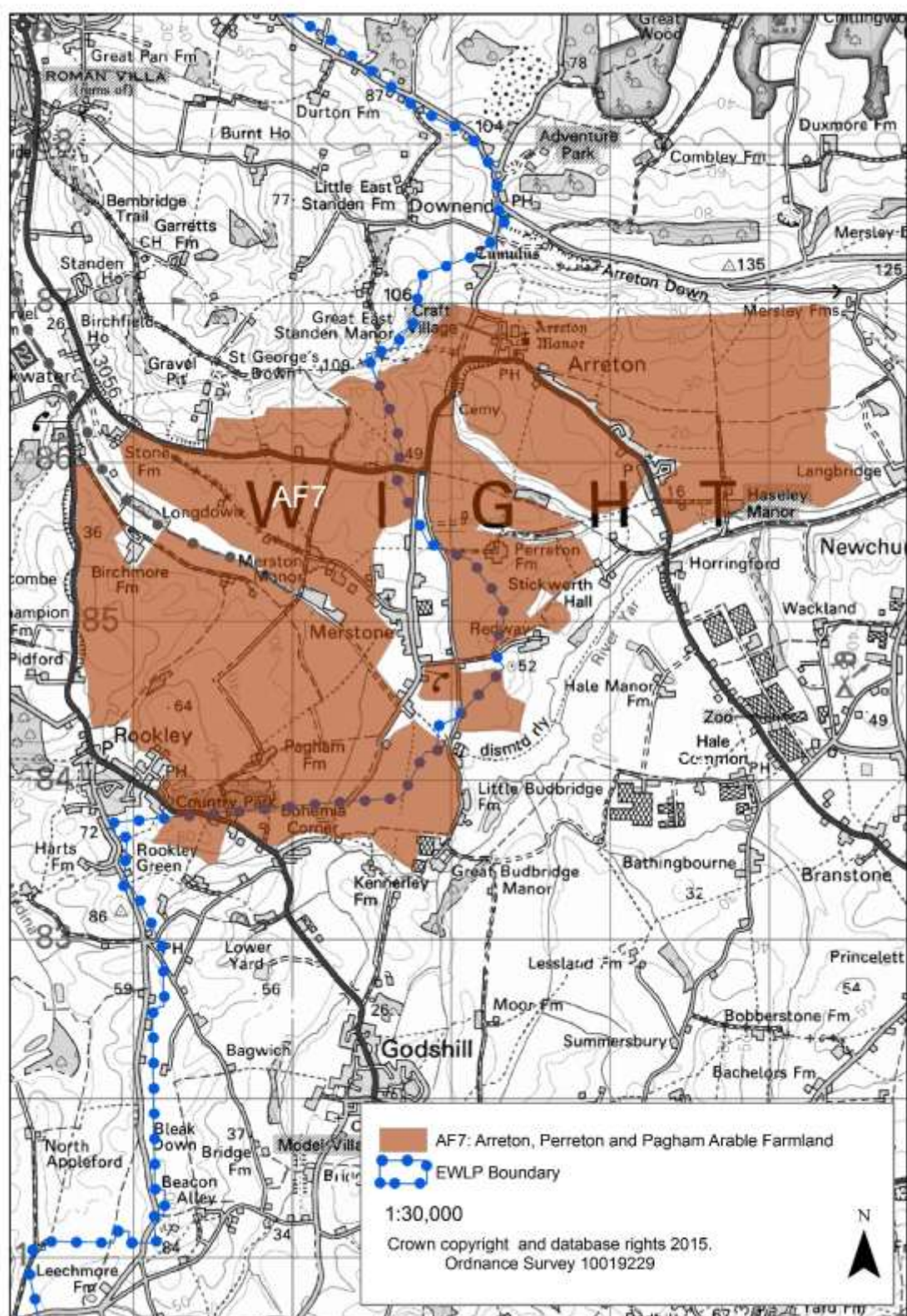
- Conserve and where possible enhance the character and inherent qualities of this character area. These include remaining hedgerows, and hedgerow trees which have seen investment through Environmental Stewardship.

### **Landscape Guidelines**

- Conserve and where possible enhance the ecological interest of this cultivated farmland landscape
- Encourage the sensitive management and retention of hedgerows, and hedgerow trees
- Encourage catchment sensitive farming approaches for the benefits this brings to adjacent watercourses



CHARACTER AREA AF7: ARRETON, PERRETON AND PAGHAM ARABLE



## Location and description

Located in the west of the East Wight area this character area extends from Blackwater Hollow in the west to just west of Mersley Lane in the east; and from the historic church manor complex at Arreton in the north to Bohemia Corner and Rookley in the south. The character area is within the civil parishes of Arreton and Godshill.

The geology of the area predominantly includes Ferruginous Sands and other smaller areas of Carstone, Sandrock Formation, and Gault with overlying River Terrace and Alluvium Deposits and a small area of Peat. Elevation ranges from 10 metres close to the valley floor up to 80 metres above Ordnance Datum close to the base of the central chalk ridge.

The Historic Landscape Characterisation indicates significant change to field patterns during the C19th and C20th including amalgamation and reorganisation of smaller fields into larger fields including a number large enough to be described as prairie like. There are also small areas of pasture and meadows enclosed in the C20th and some areas enclosed from waste, common or green in the post medieval and C18th. There is a small area of Crofts (small enclosed plots of agricultural land attached to the homes of peasants in medieval times and farmed as separate units, unlike the open fields) dating from the medieval period. The character area lies within the South Wight Sandstone and Gravel and Arreton Valley Historic Landscape Character Areas. Hedgerows mark most field boundaries and although internal boundaries may have changed the external boundaries of the character area are largely consistent with those seen on late C18th maps. Hedgerow trees are uncommon in the north of the area but can be found around Pagham in the south and between Rookley and Birchmore in the west.

This character area is largely unsettled with a number of dispersed farmsteads and historic manors. A particular cluster of historic buildings is found at Arreton, with its historic church manor complex. Many of the buildings that are present are historically important with many being listed: Broadfields Grade II; Perreton Farmhouse Grade II; Old Barn at Perreton Farm Grade II; Merstone Manor Grade II\*; Haseley Manor Grade II\*; Barn 50m north of Haseley Manor Grade II; Mounting block at Haseley Manor Grade II; Vicarage (Arreton) Grade II; Style Cottages Grade II; St Georges Church (Arreton) Grade I; 12 x various tombs and monuments in St Georges Church and Graveyard (Arreton) Grade II; Arreton Manor Grade II\*; Barn at Arreton Manor Grade II; Mounting block at Arreton Manor Grade II; Old Stable at Arreton Manor Grade II; Dove Cote at Arreton Manor Grade II; Wall at Arreton Manor Grade II. Part of the Arreton Conservation Area falls within this character area. The Monastic Grange at Haseley Manor is a Scheduled Monument.

A cultivated landscape with cereal, vegetable and oil seed (Rapeseed) crops and changing seasonal patterns. The use of field polythene to encourage early growth is

often a feature of this landscape in late winter and early spring. 90% of the area is benefitting from Environmental Stewardship at entry and higher level.

The north of the character area falls within the Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

There are two Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation in this character area: Newchurch Marshes and Perreton Down & Marsh. Part of the area (close to the valley floor) also falls within the Eastern Yar Valley Biodiversity Opportunity Area highlighting the importance and potential of wetland management.

There is an area of ancient woodland south of Pagham Farm. The National Forest Inventory indicates woodland planting at Perreton and Haseley.

Access is provided by public rights of way through the area.

### **Key Characteristics**

- Strong rural character
- Open arable fields
- A cultivated landscape that changes with the seasons
- Hedged field boundaries many of which are historic in character
- In the south of the area hedgerow trees are more common place

### **Past forces for change**

- Alteration of historic field patterns particularly in the C19th and C20th with loss of many internal boundaries. Earlier evidence of enclosure from waste, common, green, pasture and meadows in the medieval and post medieval periods
- Intensification of agricultural production and practices particularly in the latter C20th
- Environmental Stewardship funding for environmental management of farmland for nature conservation, landscape and historic environmental benefit

### **Future forces for change**

- Changes to farm gate prices and agricultural commodity markets
- Changes to the European Agricultural Funds for Rural Development and European funded farm subsidies
- Climate change impacts
- Benefits from continued investment through Environmental Stewardship



## Condition and Character

The overall condition of the features of the character of this area is judged to be **good** and the character is judged to be **good**.

## Sensitivities

- Remaining hedgerows and hedgerow trees particularly where these have a strong relationship with historic boundaries
- Habitats conserved or enhanced through Environmental Stewardship funding
- Wetland areas close to the valley floor
- Historic buildings individually and together in areas such as Arreton Conservation Area
- Ancient woodland near Pagham

## Landscape Strategy

- Conserve and where possible enhance the character and inherent qualities of this character area. These include remaining hedgerows, and hedgerow trees, and other features which have seen investment through Environmental Stewardship, and ancient woodland areas.

## Landscape Guidelines

- Conserve and where possible enhance the ecological interest of this cultivated farmland landscape
- Encourage the sensitive management and retention of hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- Conserve remaining ancient woodland areas
- Conserve historic buildings and their setting
- Conserve the medieval Monastic Grange at Haseley Manor

## LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE: CHALK DOWNS



View from Bembridge Down northwards.



View from Luccombe Down looking towards Sandown Bay.



View towards Niton Down from Coastal Path above the Undercliff.

View from Bembridge Down towards Brading and Ashey Downs.



View from Wroxall Down looking towards Rew, Stenbury and Appuldurcombe Down.

The Chalk Downs Landscape Type is located in two parts of the East Wight.

The first coincides with the visually distinct central chalk downland ridge. This runs west to east across the Isle of Wight and in the East Wight is located north of Arreton running east to the edge of Brading where it dips into the valley floor of the Eastern Yar. It then rises again at Bembridge Down running east to meet the sea where the chalk is exposed at Culver Cliff. South of this ridge the Landscape Type is flanked by Arable Farmland, Pasture Land, Sandstone Hills, and Coastal Farmland Landscape Types. To the north it is flanked by Arable Farmland and Pasture Land. Where it dips at Brading it is bisected by the Valley Floor Landscape Type. Elevation ranges from around 70 metres above Ordnance Datum on the northern edge to its highest point at Ashe Down of over 130 metres above Ordnance Datum falling to around 50 metres above Ordnance Datum on its southern edge. At its widest point it is about 1 kilometre wide.

The second coincides with the chalk upland areas in the south of the East Wight. This series of chalk downs dips steeply on its southern slope where it is flanked by The Undercliff. The downland has a wider plateau than the central ridge and is incised by a series of combs along the northern edge often the location of springlines. To the north it is flanked by Pasture Land and also abuts Changed Countryside Landscape Types. Elevation ranges from between 100 metres and 150 metres above Ordnance Datum on its northern edge rising above 240 metres at its highest point on Ventnor Downs and falling to between 90 and 70 metres above Ordnance Datum on its southern edge.

The Chalk Downs LCT is largely consistent with the South Wight Downland and East Wight Chalk Ridge Historic Landscape Character Areas. Analysis of the detail from the Historic Landscape Characterisation indicates that the Chalk Downs LCT has been enclosed from more open downland during the post medieval period or in the C18th, C19th and C20th. Parts of the area being classed as downland potentially dating from as early as the Bronze Age. Some areas of the landscape were formed from amalgamation of fields taking place in the C19th and C20th but with some evidence of change in the C18th and a further area being re-organised fields dating from the C19th and C20th with a few examples of reorganisation from the post medieval period. A small area is shown as being enclosed from open field, open field strips or open field furlongs from as early as the Medieval period right through to the early C20th. This tells us that the downland landscape is a mosaic of ancient grasslands, woodland of steep slopes (including areas of ancient woodland such as Eaglehead Copse and Bloodstone Copses), pasture land some of which may have formerly been cultivated as part of an open field system, and arable fields.

This landscape type has high nature conservation value signified by the extent of international, national and local designations. It is also an important historic

environment with many scheduled monuments, sites and areas of archaeological interest.

Large areas of open access and an extensive public rights of way network provide access throughout the area.

### **Key Characteristics**

- Open landscape often with an exposed feel
- Long distance views across the landscape and out to sea
- Calcareous soils over Upper, Middle and Lower Chalk geology
- Acidic soils over Upper Greensand and Angular Flint Gravel Deposit geology
- A lack of enclosure (particularly in the chalk downland in the south of the East Wight)
- Dramatic exposed white chalk sea cliffs
- Landmarks and structures present where these have required or taken advantage of the elevation and unobstructed nature of the downs
- Species rich chalk grassland, acid grassland and heathland
- A landscape rich in archaeology and heritage assets
- A mix of extensive and more intensive grazing and some areas of arable farming throughout the area
- Historic quarry sites
- Ancient woodland found on steep slopes
- Few buildings and little if any settlement in this Landscape Type, with smaller hamlets and villages often being located in adjacent areas where the downland provides shelter or where natural springs rise at the base of the chalk
- Public rights of way run to, from and across the downland and are often an historic record of access throughout the area
- Extensive areas of open access land



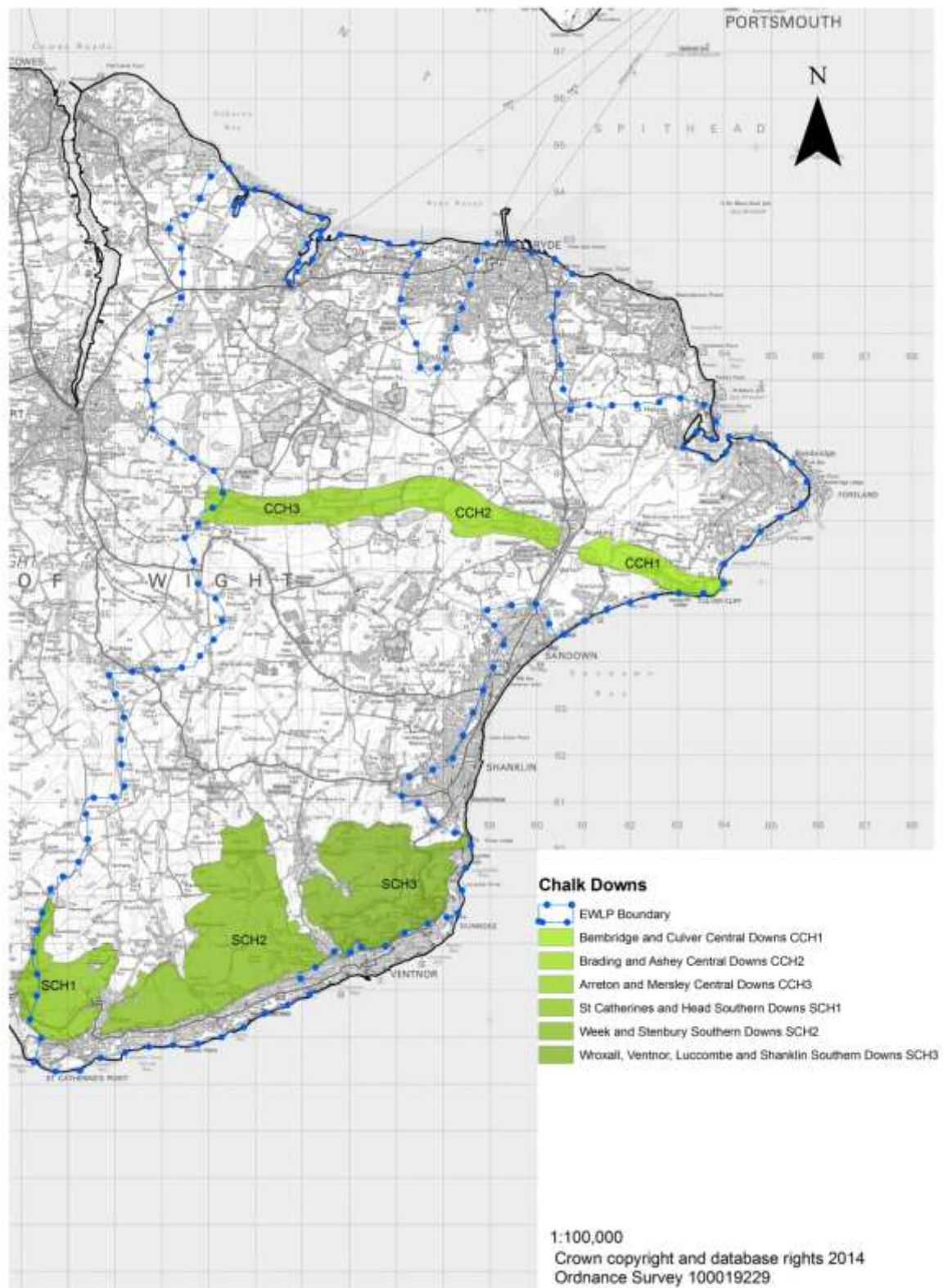
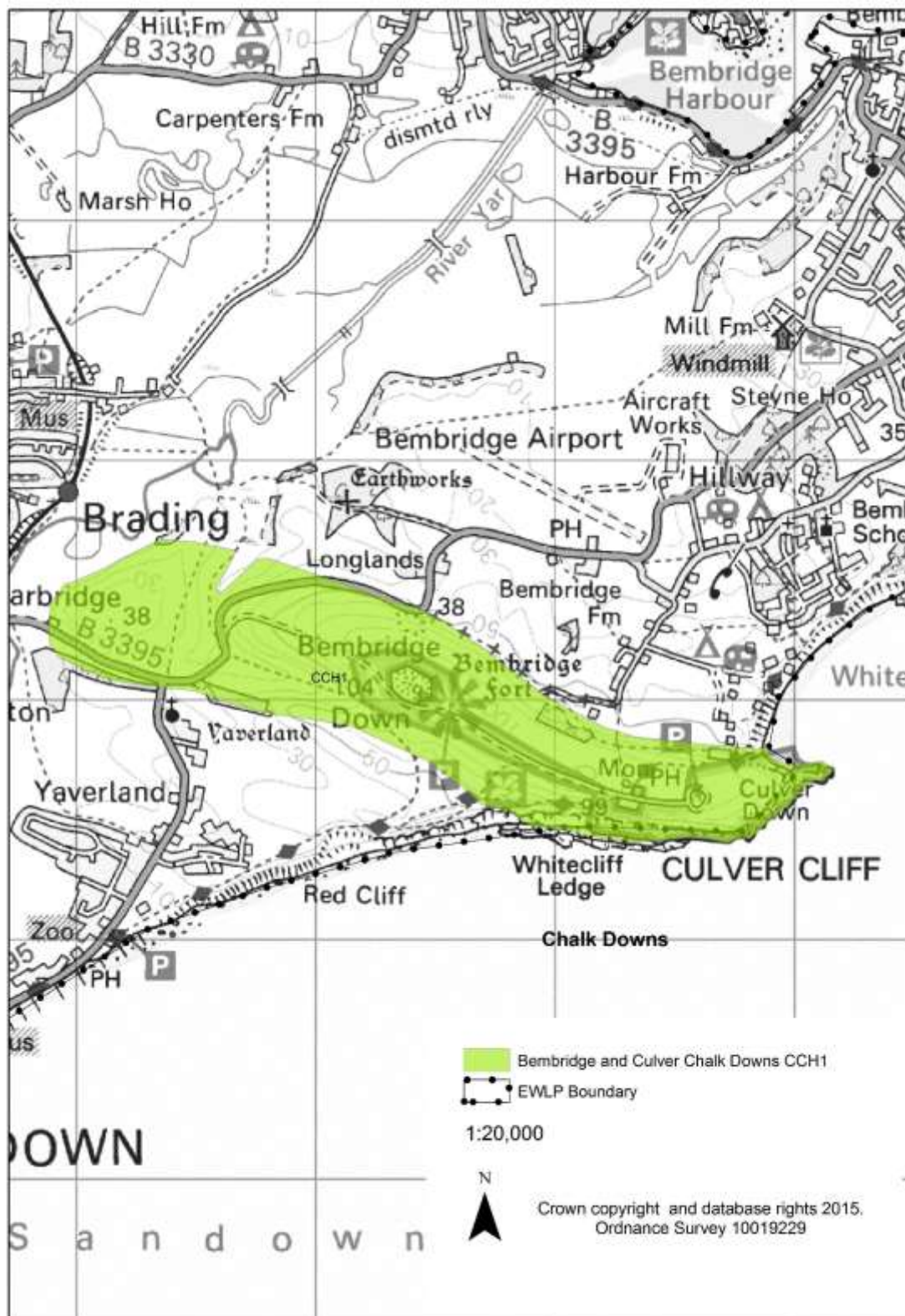


Figure 27: Chalk Downs Landscape Character Areas





## CHARACTER AREA CCH1: BEMBRIDGE AND CULVER CENTRAL DOWNS



## Location and description

Located in the very east of the East Wight area this character type extends from the edge of Brading Marsh in the west to Whitecliff Ledge in the east. It is located in Sandown and Bembridge civil parishes. It follows the base of the chalk down along its northern edge and to the base of the chalk slope on the southern side.

Underlying geology includes Upper Greensand Formation (in the southern part of the area), Gault, Upper and Lower Chalk. Elevation ranges from around 10 metres close to Brading Marshes in the west to 100 metres above Ordnance Datum on top of the downland ridge.

An open landscape with long distance views across the Island to the Solent and mainland coast to the north and to Sandown Bay and the English Channel to the south. Steeper slopes have seen the growth of secondary woodland particularly on the northern downland slope and in former quarry sites. Hedgerows are very sparse except where they run alongside the roadway which traverses the down or they lie close to its base. Post and wire fencing is also found in this landscape along the cliff top and beside the road. Scrub is found on some slopes adding to the mosaic of habitats. A number of parking areas have been established to take advantage of the long distance and panoramic views.

The Historic Landscape Characterisation indicates change to the field patterns in the area with the enclosure of downland, and smaller areas of pasture and meadows, waste, common and greens, open field and open field furlongs from the post medieval period. There are also more recent changes in the C19th and C20th including re-organised fields and amalgamated fields. Extensive areas of downland remain largely unchanged since the initial clearance of woodland probably taking place in the Bronze Age.

Today the area is largely unsettled with the only built development being related to defence or coastal safety such as Bembridge Fort, Culver Battery and Coastguard Cottages. The Grade II listed Lord Yarborough's Monument is large eye catching obelisk and landmark on top of the down. Originally sited on Bembridge Down it was moved when Bembridge Fort was built in the late C19th. Bembridge Fort is also a Scheduled Monument, as is a bowl barrow on Culver Down. The area falls within the Yaverland and Brading medieval parishes. The area falls within the East Wight Chalk Ridge and Brading Haven and Bembridge Isle Historic Landscape Character Areas.

Almost the entire area falls within the Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty except the north west corner.

This area is highly designated for its wildlife and nature conservation importance. This includes a small area in the north west which falls within the internationally significant Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar and Special Protection Area,

indicating its importance as a wetland area and habitat particularly for bird species. The coastline falls within the internationally significant South Wight Maritime Special Area of Conservation reflecting the importance of its vegetated maritime cliffs and changing habitats caused by the dynamic process of coastal erosion. Parts of the area fall within the nationally designated Whitecliff Bay and Bembridge Ledges Site of Special Scientific Interest and a large part of the downland is designated as the Bembridge Downs Site of Special Scientific Interest. A very small part of the Brading Marshes and St Helens Ledges Site of Special Scientific Interest is located in the north west of the area. Northlands Copse and Marshcombe Copse are both Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation and ancient woodlands. Much of the area falls within the Eastern Central Ridge Biodiversity Opportunity Area.

The area is predominantly extensively grazed permanent grassland with some more intensive grazing on the northern slopes. Around 75% of the area benefits from Environmental Stewardship at higher level. The landscape also benefitted from the former Countryside Stewardship Scheme focussed on lowland pastures on neutral/acid soils and the regeneration of grassland.

A large part of this area is open access land and it is crossed by a number of public rights of way including part of the Isle of Wight coastal path. Viewpoints and downland car parks are also a feature of the area as there is a road access the length of the downland ridge.

### **Key Characteristics**

- Open landscape often with an exposed feel
- Long distance views across the landscape and out to sea
- A chalk landscape with large unenclosed extensively grazed pastures of high ecological, historic and landscape value
- Dramatic exposed chalk cliffs
- Ancient woodland and secondary woodland areas found on steep slopes or in former quarry sites
- Important historic sites associated with the elevated and maritime position of the area (Fort, Coastguard Cottages, Monument, Battery)
- Public rights of way including the Isle of Wight Coastal Path cross this landscape with much of the area being open access land
- Lord Yarborough Monument and Bembridge Fort are important landmarks

### **Past forces for change**

- Enclosure of downland and other areas for more intensive grazing and cultivation
- More recent arable reversion to grassland
- Scrub growth and secondary woodland

- Charitable ownership and active conservation of much of the area (National Trust)
- Environmental Stewardship funding for landscape, nature conservation and historic environment benefits
- Increased popularity of the area for walkers and use of viewpoint car parks
- Coastal erosion

### **Future forces for change**

- Climate change impacts
- Benefits from continued investment through Environmental Stewardship schemes
- Possible increased visitor numbers
- Scrub management
- Greater access to Bembridge Fort

### **Condition and Character**

The overall condition of the features of this character area are judged to be **good** and the character of the area is judged to be **strong**.

### **Sensitivities**

- Openness and panoramic views
- Chalk grassland habitats
- Vegetated maritime cliffs
- Historic structures associated with the use of the area for defence or maritime safety
- Ancient woodlands
- Archaeology and scheduled monuments

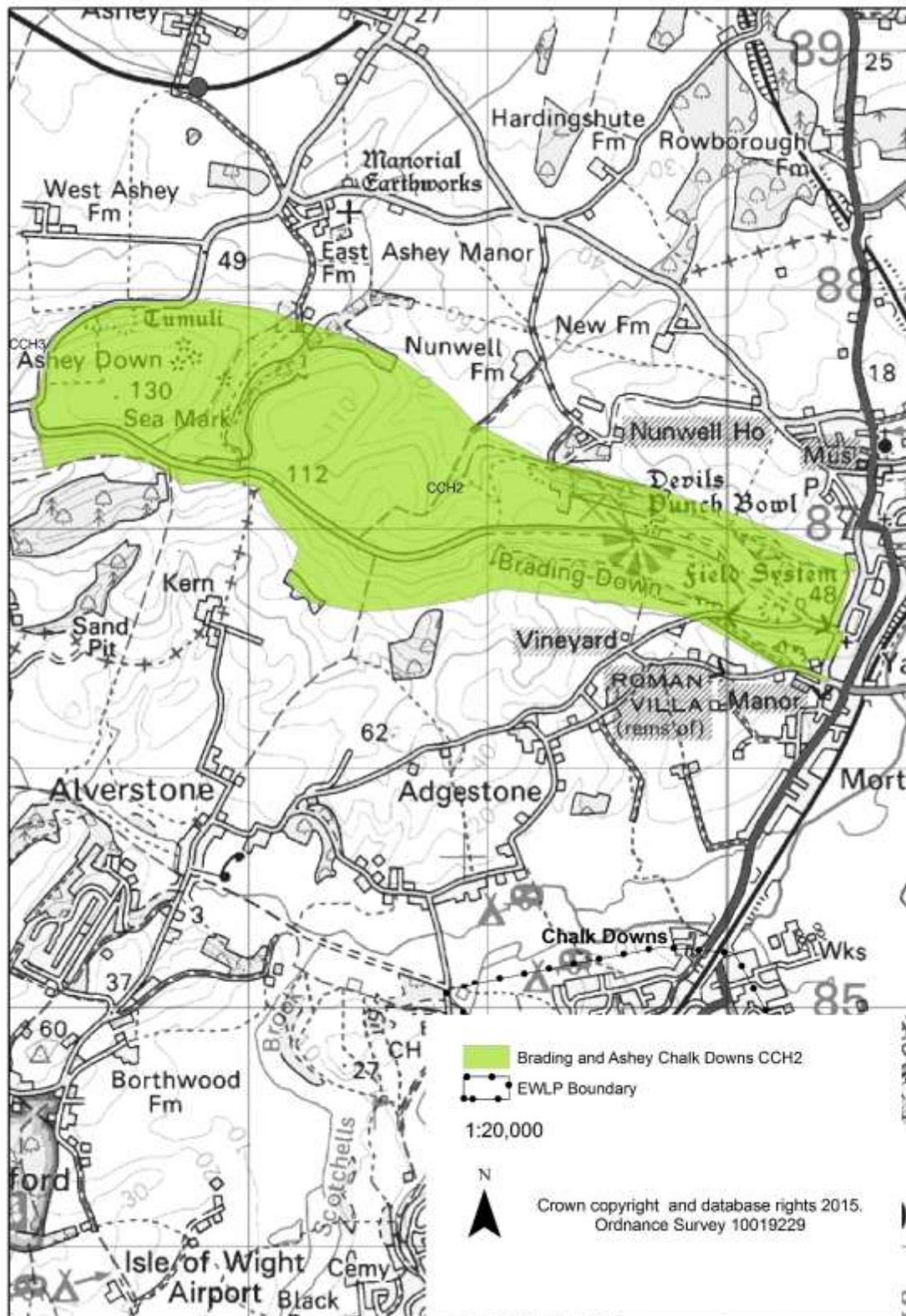
### **Landscape Strategy**

- Conserve the character and inherent qualities of this character area. These include chalk grassland, vegetated maritime cliffs, historic sites and monuments, long distance views and the generally open aspect of the area.

### **Landscape Guidelines**

- Conserve the features contributing to the character of this area including its international, national and local importance for nature conservation, historic environment and landscape.
- Manage scrub invasion to retain a mosaic of habitats
- Seek to manage visitor pressures at view points, car parks and on key public rights of way to minimise any visual intrusion or damage to natural and historic environments
- Conserve ancient woodland areas

## CHARACTER AREA CCH2: BRADING AND ASHEY CENTRAL DOWNS





## Location and description

This character area extends from the edge of the town of Brading in the east to the junction of the Downs Road and Ashey Road in the west and is within Newchurch, Havenstreet & Ashey and Brading civil parishes. It includes the extent of the central chalk ridge from the base of the chalk in the north of the downs to the base of the slope of the downs (which includes sandstone areas) in the south.

The underlying geology is Upper Greensand, Carstone, Gault, Upper Chalk, Middle and Lower Chalk Formations. There is also a small area of Clay with Flints drift geology capping part of the downland. Elevation ranges from 20 metres close to the town of Brading to 130 metres above Ordnance Datum at Ashey Down.

Traversed by the Downs Road the area offers open panoramic views of the Isle of Wight landscape, the Solent and mainland coast to the north and to Sandown Bay and the English Channel to the south. There are large areas of extensive grazing, large arable areas on the northern side of the area, woodland on the steep slopes and the at the base of parts of the northern slope and in a well wooded valley containing Eaglehead and Bloodstone Copse.

The Historic Landscape Characterisation indicates that the field patterns in the area changed in the C20th including enclosed downland, re-organised fields, amalgamated fields and a small area of sub divided fields and enclosed open field strips in the C19th. The area is unsettled with no buildings located in the area. The area lies within the medieval parishes of Newchurch and Brading and within the East Wight Chalk Ridge, Newchurch Environs and Sandown Bay and a small part of Northern Lowlands Historic Landscape Character Areas.

Hedgerows and small pockets of woodland are a feature of this landscape particularly on the southern slope and in the very north of the area close to Nunwell. More open and exposed grassland and arable areas are found at Brading Down, Ashey Down and Nunwell Down. Ashey Down also has a number of small field trees.

Part of the nationally Registered Park and Garden of Special Historic Interest at Nunwell falls within this character area. There are numerous scheduled monuments throughout the area including many on Ashey Down and Middle West Down, these include pillow mounds, bowl barrows, round barrows and the prominent Ashey Sea Mark and an extensive field system at Brading Down.

Almost the entire area falls within the Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty except a small area close to Brading in the east.

Around 70% of the area has benefited from Environmental Stewardship at entry and higher level. Some areas also benefited from the former Countryside Stewardship

programme targeting calcareous grassland, re introduction of grassland management, and management of scrub.

Eaglehead and Bloodstone Copses are a Site of Special Scientific Interest both are ancient woodlands. There are three further areas of ancient woodland: Kelly's Copse; Six Acre Copse and one unnamed woodland area. There are many Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation in the area: Brading Down west; Kern Down Chalk Pit; Knighton Down; Ashey Down Chalk Pit; Ashey Down; Brading Down; and Nunwell Park. These are important for their chalk grassland and historic parkland interest. The area falls within the Eastern Central Ridge Biodiversity Opportunity Area targeting restoration and recreation of chalk grassland and focussing on butterfly habitats.

A small area of woodland planting has taken place in this area close to Kelly's Copse.

Public footpaths and some areas of open access land are found in this character area. The Downland Way runs parallel to the Downs Road. Brading Downs Viewpoint is a popular car park area for those wishing to appreciate the views to the English Channel and to walk from the area.

### **Key Characteristics**

- Open exposed landscape
- Areas of arable cultivation on north side of the downland
- Panoramic views of the Island, mainland coast, Solent and English Channel
- Ancient woodland areas some of which are of national significance for their woodland habitat
- Chalk grasslands
- Significant archaeological value particularly at Ashey Down and Brading Down
- Ashey Seamark an important landmark

### **Past forces for change**

- Enclosure of downland for intensive and extensive grazing with some areas being used for arable cultivation
- Landscape, natural and historic environmental benefits from Countryside Stewardship and Environmental Stewardship programmes
- Increased popularity of the Brading Downs Viewpoint car park and impact of vehicle movements on the scheduled monument
- Intensification of agricultural practices during the late C20th
- Scrub and secondary woodland growth

### **Future forces for change**

- Climate change impacts
- Potential for further arable reversion to grassland
- Possible increased visitor numbers at Brading Viewpoint car park
- Scrub management
- Benefits of continued investment through Environmental Stewardship schemes

### **Condition and Character**

The overall condition of the features of this character area are judged to be **good** and the character of the area is judged to be **strong**.

### **Sensitivities**

- Openness and panoramic views
- Chalk grassland habitats
- Archaeological sites and the Asheys Sea Mark which is an important land mark feature seen from many areas across the East Wight and beyond
- Ancient woodlands

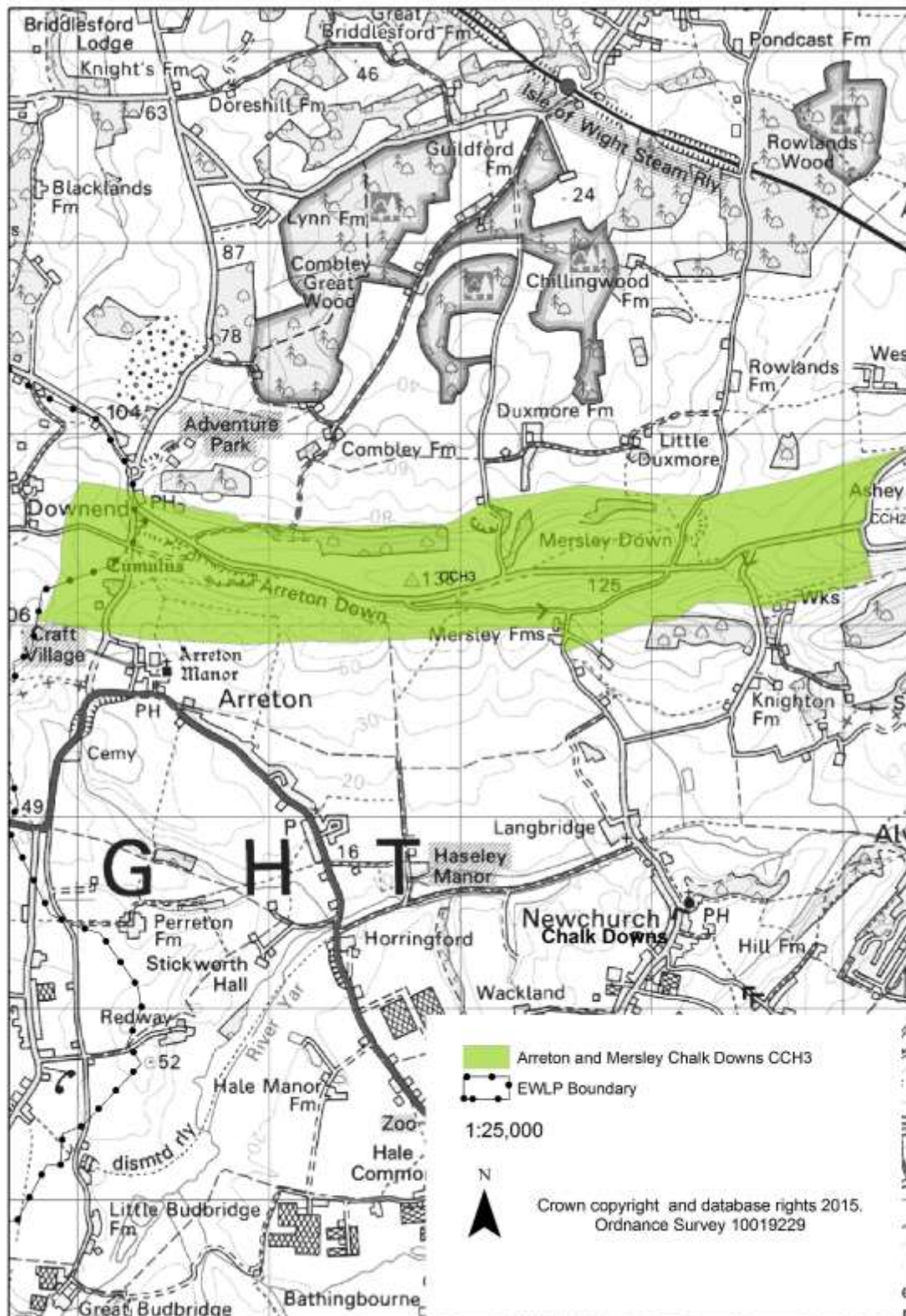
### **Landscape Strategy**

- Conserve the character and inherent qualities of this character area. These include the important chalk grasslands, historic sites and monuments, open views, and ancient woodlands. Identify opportunities to increase the chalk grassland through restoration and arable reversion.

### **Landscape Guidelines**

- Conserve the features contributing to the character of this area including its national and local importance for nature conservation, historic environment and landscape.
- Manage scrub invasion to retain a mosaic of habitats
- Seek to manage visitor pressures at view points on key public rights of way to minimise any visual intrusion or damage to natural and historic environments
- Conserve ancient woodland areas
- Seek opportunities to restore chalk grasslands

## CHARACTER AREA CCH3: ARRETON AND MERSLEY CENTRAL DOWNS



## Location and description

This character area extends from just west of Downend in the west to the junction with Asheys Road and the road to Brading in the east. It takes in the whole width of the central ridge from north to south. It falls within Havenstreet & Asheys, Newchurch and Arreton civil parishes.

The underlying geology consists of Upper Greensand, Carstone, Sandrock Formation, Gault and Upper, Middle and Lower Chalk Formations. There are some small areas of Clay with Flints overlying drift deposits. Elevation ranges from 40 metres on the southern slope and 80 metres on the northern slope to 130 metres at its highest point above Ordnance Datum.

An open landscape with long distance views across the Island to the Solent and mainland coastline to the north and across the Arreton Valley south towards the southern chalk downland. A band of woodland runs along the base of the northern slope and thicker hedgerow bands are located to the base of the southern slope. The Downs Road runs along the ridge, this route is well used despite being an unclassified road. Parallel to the road the Downland Way footpath provides an important linking footpath offering panoramic views. At Downend the former chalk pit is fairly well hidden from the wider landscape, except for a narrow band of chalk on the northern cliff face which appears above the chalk downland from views to the south. A small active chalk quarry is located on the north side of the downland and many small historic quarrying sites are found along the southern slope where chalk has been extracted in the past.

The Historic Landscape Characterisation indicates change in the field patterns in this area during the C18th with the enclosure of downland and then in the C19th and C20th including, re-organised fields and amalgamated fields and some assarting of woodland. Large areas of open downland are still in existence and may date back to original woodland clearance possibly during the Bronze Age. The area is largely unsettled with the exception of Mersley Farm in the east and the Hare and Hounds Pub and some cottages at Downend in the west. The Hare and Hounds pub is a Grade II listed building and at Mersley a Milestone in the barn wall is also Grade II listed. There are a number of Scheduled Monument bowl barrows located across the downland. The area falls within the medieval parishes of Newchurch and Arreton and within the East Wight Chalk Ridge; South Wight Sandstone and Gravel; Arreton Valley; Newchurch Environs and Sandown Bay and Northern Lowlands Historic Landscape Character Areas. Part of the downland north of the historic core of Arreton village is within the Arreton Conservation Area.

The whole area falls within the Isle of Wight AONB.

The majority of the area is extensively grazed with some areas of arable land on the very southern edge above the village of Arreton and west of Downend. Around 80% of the area is within Environmental Stewardship at entry and higher level.

Arreton Down is a Site of Special Scientific Interest noted for its extensive south facing species rich chalk grassland of particular importance for butterfly and cricket species. It also includes a number of historic chalk pits which retain some areas of exposed rock important for bee orchid and kidney vetch and areas of longer grass, scrub and woodland important for bird species.

There are a number of Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation in the area including: part of Knighton West Wood; Mersley Chalkpit; Knighton Down; Mersley Down North and Arreton Down North.

Knighton West Wood is also an ancient woodland and two further small areas of ancient woodland are found on the north slope of the down. A small amount of additional woodland planting has taken place close to the ancient woodland (2.48 hectares) since the 1990s.

### **Key Characteristics**

- Open landscape often with an exposed feel
- Long distance views across the landscape to the northern coastline and to the south chalk downs
- A species rich chalk downland important for key species
- Small areas of ancient woodland and more expansive areas of scrub and secondary woodland in former quarries and at the base of the downland slopes
- Largely unsettled other than the small hamlet at Downend and the farmstead at Mersley
- Important archaeological sites
- Extensive areas of open access land, public rights of way network connecting the downland with the landscape to the north and south and the Downland Way running parallel to the Downs Road
- Largely tranquil in character but occasionally busy with traffic during peak periods and with lighting, parked vehicles and music from the yearly Bestival music festival held close by at Robin Hill

### **Past forces for change**

- Enclosure of downland and amalgamation and reorganisation of field patterns from the C18th onwards and particularly in the late C19th and C20th
- Quarrying sites most of which are historic and now form important habitat
- Charitable ownership and active conservation of Arreton Down (Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust)



- Environmental Stewardship funding for landscape, nature conservation and historic environmental benefits
- Popularity of Arreton Down with walkers and those exercising their dogs
- Increased traffic on the Downs Road and erosion of verges
- Annual impact of the traffic, parking, lighting associated with the Bestival music festival
- Open access land

### **Future forces for change**

- Climate change impacts
- Benefits of continued investment through Environmental Stewardship
- Possible visitor pressure
- Scrub management
- Traffic levels and resultant impact on tranquillity and verges

### **Condition and Character**

Overall the condition of the features of this character area are judged to be **good** and the character of the area is judged to be **strong**.

### **Sensitivities**

- Openness and panoramic views
- Chalk grassland habitats of particular importance for butterfly and cricket species and chalk grassland flora
- Undesignated and scheduled archaeological sites
- Ancient woodlands

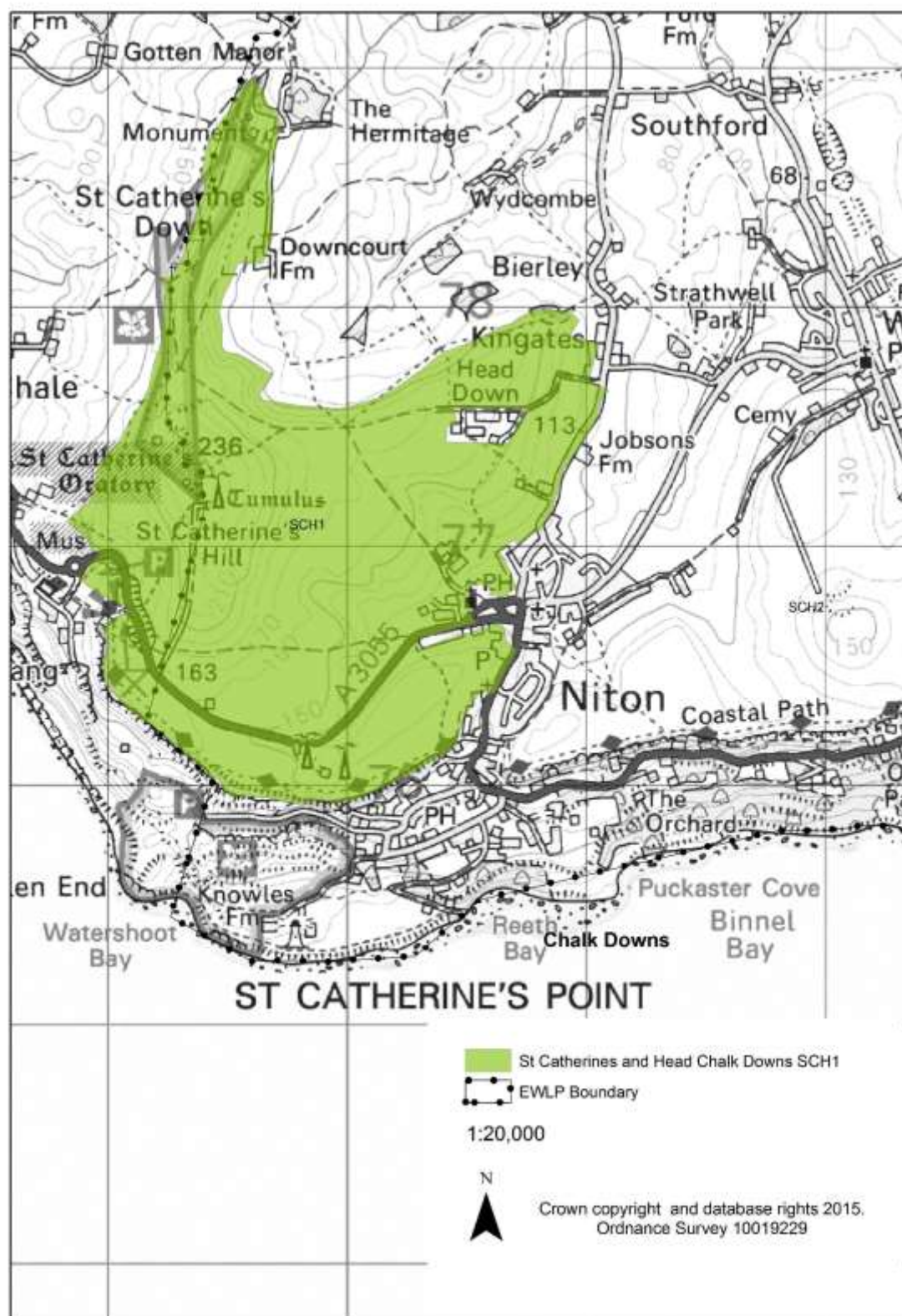
### **Landscape Strategy**

- Conserve the character and inherent qualities of this character area. These include chalk grassland, historic sites, its open aspect and long distance views and ancient woodland areas.

### **Landscape Guidelines**

- Conserve the features contributing to the character of this area including its national and local importance for nature conservation, historic environment and landscape
- Manage scrub invasion whilst recognising its contribution to a mosaic of habitats
- Conserve and where possible restore chalk grassland
- Manage visitor pressures at key sites
- Monitor the impact of traffic using the Downs Road on its rural character and in particular its verges
- Conserve ancient woodland areas

## CHARACTER AREA SCH1: ST CATHERINE'S AND HEAD SOUTHERN DOWNS



## Location and description

This area of chalk downland is located in the south west of the East Wight and extends from the top of the inland cliff above the Undercliff in the south and south west along the western side of St Catherine's Down and St Catherine's Hill in the west to just west of the Hermitage in the north and the western side of Niton village in the east. The area is located in the Chale, Niton & Whitwell and Godshill civil parishes.

Underlying geology includes Upper Greensand, Lower Chalk and Gault with a small cap of Clay with Flints drift deposit on St Catherine's Down. Elevation ranges from 110 metres to more than 230 metres above Ordnance Datum.

Almost the whole of this area is within the Isle of Wight AONB with the exception of land between Niton and Head Down.

A very open landscape with extensive views across the Island's landscape, along the Back of the Wight south west coastline and out to the English Channel. Hedgerows are fairly sparse except at the base of the downland in the north of the area. Stone walls are a feature of this landscape area demarcating field boundaries on the southern downland slopes. Woodland areas occur on the slopes and at the base of the downs in the north of the area. The northern and western slopes of St Catherine's Hill are punctuated by many historic quarry sites which are now largely grassed over. Around 60% of the area is within Environmental Stewardship at entry and higher level including areas under its organic scheme.

A very rural landscape with a mix of extensively grazed downland and large arable fields. There is little development other than the iconic C13th St Catherine's Oratory on St Catherine's Hill known locally as the Pepperpot because of its distinctive shape; a nearby communications mast and the Hoy Monument on St Catherine's Down near the Hermitage; the former Niton Radio Station buildings and another single isolated cottage on the Blackgang Road, and the farmsteads of Ladyacre Farm, Down Court Farm and Niton Manor Farm. The area skirts the edge of the village of Niton. Listed Buildings in the area include Niton Baptist Church Grade II; Niton Manor Grade II; The Old Lighthouse Grade II; Cottage at Jobson's Farm Grade II; Down Court Farm Grade II; Hoy's Monument Grade II. Scheduled Monuments include three bowl barrows and the St Catherine's Oratory medieval lighthouse. The area falls within the medieval parishes of Chale, Whitwell, Godshill and Niton.

The Historic Landscape Characterisation indicates extensive areas of open downland in this area probably dating back to initial woodland clearance in the Bronze Age. Other areas show evidence of enclosure from downland from the medieval period through to the C20th; enclosure of waste, common or green in the medieval period; enclosure of open field/open field furlongs from the post medieval period and in the C20th in the south east of the area between the village of Niton and

the inland cliff top; and re-organisation and amalgamation of fields in the C18th, C19th and C20th. There are also significant areas of rough ground particularly in the west of the area on the edges of St Catherine's Hill and St Catherine's Down. The area falls within the South Wight Downland and South Wight Downland Edge Historic Landscape Character Areas. The St John the Baptist Church at Niton is on the Heritage at Risk Register due to failing masonry and ingress of water.

The inland cliff in the southern part of the area lies within the South Wight Maritime Special Conservation Area but is predominantly within the adjacent The Undercliff Landscape Character Type.

West of the former Niton Radio Station, the fields between the main A3055 Blackgang Road and the cliff top partly fall within the Compton to Steephill Cove Site of Special Scientific Interest. This area is important for its vegetated maritime cliffs and slopes, species rich unimproved grassland and outstanding communities of rare and scarce plants and invertebrates. There are also a number of Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation including Head Down; Gore Down; St Catherine's Down and St Catherine's Hill. The west of the area falls within the South West Coast Biodiversity Opportunity Area whose targets include the creation of a buffer strip along cliff tops, and habitat improvement for farmland birds.

Extensive open access areas at St Catherine's Down and St Catherine's Hill and a good network of public rights of way including part of the Isle of Wight Coastal Path. Blackgang Viewpoint Car Park is a popular location for people to view the south west coastline and access the public rights of way network in the area.

### **Key Characteristics**

- Open and exposed landscape with few hedgerows
- Panoramic views of the Island's landscape, south west coastline, the Undercliff and out to sea
- Stone walls are used as a means of enclosure on the southern slopes of the downland in this area
- Woodland is found at the base of the northern slopes of the downland in the north of the area with the rest of the area being unwooded with any individual trees being stunted and bent by the prevailing wind
- St Catherine's Oratory and Hoy's Monument are key landmarks visible from many parts of the East Wight and West Wight areas
- Chalk grassland and the slopes and exposed rock of the inland Upper Greensand Cliffs are important habitats
- Scattered farmsteads at the base of the downland
- Mix of rolling open downland and large open arable fields

## Past forces for change

- Enclosure of downland for grazing and arable cultivation
- Scrub and secondary woodland particularly on the more sheltered northern slopes of the downs
- Charitable ownership and active conservation of large parts of the area at St Catherine's Down and St Catherine's Hill (National Trust)
- Environmental Stewardship funding for landscape, nature conservation and historic environmental benefits
- Cliff falls along the cliff top of the Upper Greensand inland cliff
- Visitor pressure at key sites and on key public rights of way (Blackgang Viewpoint, Coastal Path and access to the St Catherine's Oratory)

## Future forces for change

- Further cliff falls along the top of the Upper Greensand cliff
- Climate change impacts
- Benefits from continued investment through Environmental Stewardship schemes
- Visitor pressure at key viewpoints and popular rights of way
- Scrub management
- Changes to farm gate prices and agricultural commodity markets
- Changes to European Agricultural Funds for Rural Development and European funded farm subsidies

## Condition and Character

The overall condition of the features of this character area is judged to be **good** and the character of the area is judged to be **strong**.

## Sensitivities

- Chalk grassland habitats
- Panoramic long distance views
- Open aspect and exposed feel
- Stone walls
- Cliff top habitats - maritime slope and vegetated cliff
- Land mark features of the Hoy's Monument and St Catherine's Oratory and archaeological sites

## Landscape Strategy

- Conserve the character and inherent qualities of this character area. These include the stone walls, open and exposed feel, historic structures and monuments, panoramic long distance views, chalk grassland and maritime

slopes and vegetated cliffs, and all other aspects that have received investment through the Environmental Stewardship scheme.

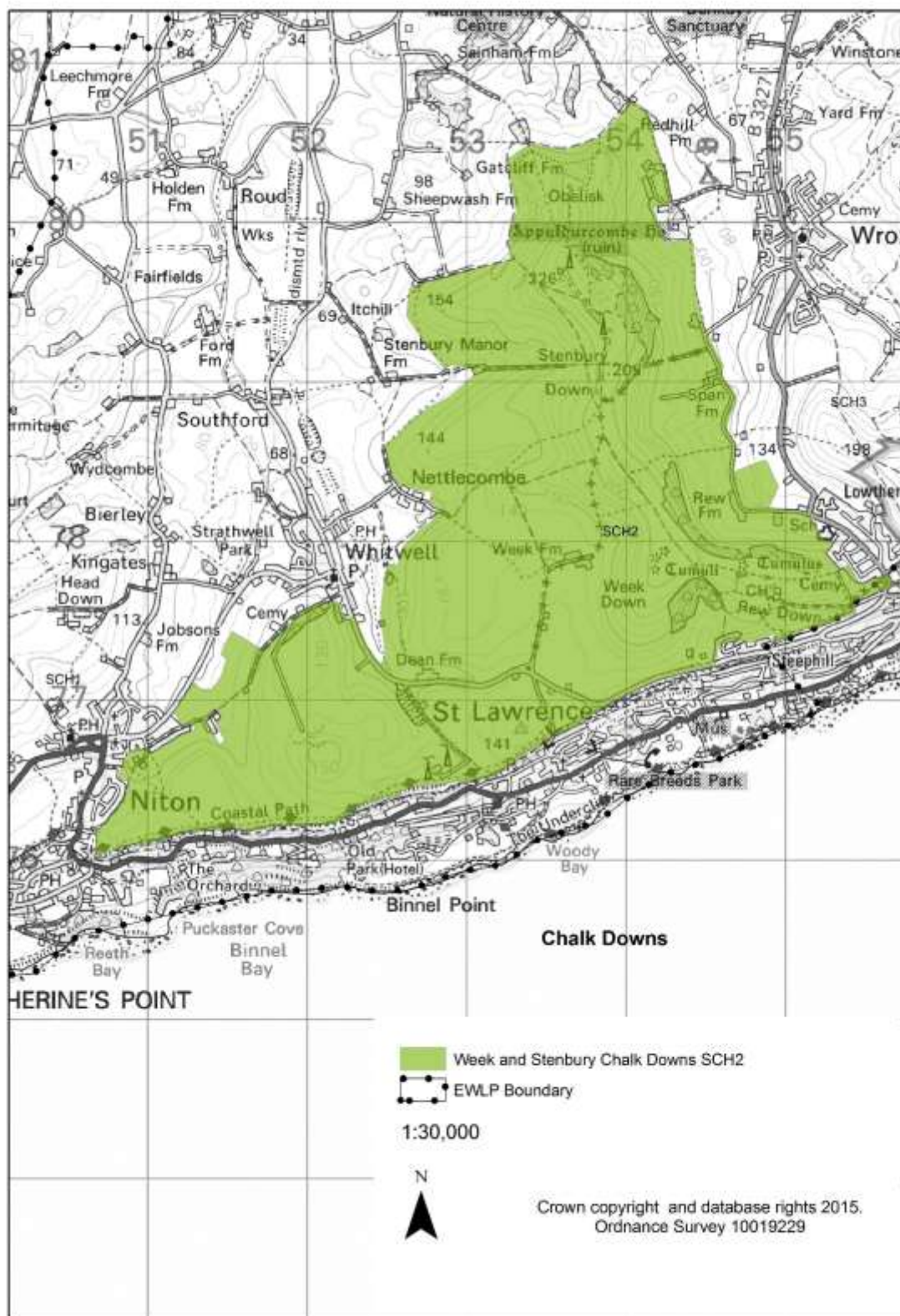
### **Landscape Guidelines**

- Conserve chalk grassland
- Conserve cliff top habitats and encourage the development of a buffer strip in adjacent farm land
- Identify opportunities for farmland birds
- Conserve, and where necessary repair stone walls where they act as important enclosure boundaries
- Manage visitor pressure at key sites and on well used public rights of way
- Conserve the historic landmarks and archaeological sites within the area





## CHARACTER AREA SCH2: WEEK AND STENBURY SOUTHERN DOWNS



## Location and description

Located in the south of the East Wight area this character area extends from the eastern edge of the village of Niton in the west to the western side of Lowtherville (Upper Ventnor) in the east and from the top of the inland cliff above the Undercliff in the south to Gatcliff in the north. It falls within the following civil parishes; Ventnor; Niton and Whitwell; Godshell and Wroxall.

An open and expansive landscape with the dramatic downland ridge in the east which includes Week Down, Rew Down, Stenbury Down and Appuldurcombe Down, rolling pastures in the north west leading down to Stenbury Manor and large flatter open arable fields at Week and above the inland cliff in the south. The downland part of the historic parkland of Appuldurcombe falls within this area. Hanger woodlands are found on the eastern side of the downs and areas of scrub can be found in former quarry sites which are located along the slopes of the downland and on steeper slopes which are more difficult to graze. Hedgerows are found in the north of the area but tend to be short except where they are associated with trackways up onto the downland. Panoramic views are afforded from the downland and also from the expansive cultivated fields above the inland cliff in the south.

Underlying geology includes Lower Chalk, Upper Chalk, Carstone and Gault formations. The downland is capped by River Terrace and Clay with Flints drift deposits and in the base of the combes which incise into the northern side of the area there are areas of Alluvium deposits. Elevation ranges between 90 metres and 210 metres above Ordnance Datum.

Nearly all of the area is within the Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty with the exception of a small area close to the eastern side of the village of Niton.

The Historic Landscape Characterisation indicates a small area of open downland (Rew Down) which may have been cleared from woodland as early as the Bronze Age. There are extensive tracts of enclosed downland thought to have taken place from the post medieval period, large areas of enclosed parkland dating from the C20th, small areas of enclosed common/waste/green possibly dating from the medieval period, small areas of enclosed pasture/meadows probably dating from the post medieval period, larger areas of amalgamated fields dating from the C19th and C20th, and large areas of enclosed open field/open field furlongs and enclosed open fields from the medieval period on the arable lands above the inland cliff. The area falls within the South Wight Downland and South Wight Downland Edge Historic Landscape Character Areas and within the medieval parishes of Newchurch, Whitwell, Godshell, Niton and St Lawrence.

The area has a strong rural feel and is fairly unsettled with the exception of a number of small farmsteads, and rural cottages. Settlement is found on the edge of the area at Niton, Whitwell and Upper Ventnor (including along Whitwell Road). A number of

communication mast sites are located within this area particularly on the downland. Listed buildings include: The Fields and Hurdcot Grade II; Dean Farmhouse Grade II; Cartshed east of Dean Farm Grade II; Barn, outbuildings and cowsheds around the yard to the east of Dean Farm Grade II; Berryl Grade II; Water hydrant in Whitwell Grade II; Wall southwest of Appuldurcombe House (along the west side of the downs) Grade II; Ice house west of Appuldurcombe Grade II; Remains of an obelisk on Appuldurcombe Down (Grade II); Cemetery Chapel at Ventnor Cemetery Grade II; Mortuary at Ventnor Cemetery Grade II. Ventnor cemetery is also on the Local List for its historic importance.

Appuldurcombe Park falls partly within this area. It is on the national Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest for its importance as a designed parkland landscape designed by Lancelot 'Capability' Brown.

There are a number of scheduled monuments in the area: clusters of round barrows on Week Down and close to Week Farm; the remains of a medieval settlement and moated site at Stenbury Manor; and the Freemantle Gate at Appuldurcombe.

The area sees a mix of extensive grazing on chalk grasslands, large tracts of arable cultivation and a number of hanger woodlands. Around 75% of the area benefits from Environmental Stewardship at both entry and entry level with higher level with some areas being within the organic scheme.

Rew Down is a Site of Special Scientific Interest important for chalk grassland flora and fauna and for acid grasslands on areas of drift gravel deposits capping the downland. A large part of the site is a Local Nature Reserve.

Part of the area falls within the Southern Uplands Biodiversity Opportunity Area with targets for chalk grassland restoration and recreation and coastal scrub management.

There are a number of small ancient woodlands in the area, Rew Copse and Appuldurcombe Park are located on the slopes of the downs and a small area of Osiers is located close to Ventnor Road south of Whitwell. Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation in the area include: Rew Copse; Watcombe Down; Appuldurcombe Down and High Hat.

Public rights of way give access across the area and include the Isle of Wight Coastal Path and Stenbury Trail. Appuldurcombe Down and Week Down are Open Access areas.

## **Key Characteristics**

- Open landscape often with an exposed feel
- Long distance panoramic views across the Island's landscape and out to the English Channel
- A chalk landscape largely grazed on the downlands and with large arable fields in the south of the area at the base of the Week Down and above the inland cliff top
- Important historic parkland at Appuldurcombe with prominent outer park wall skirting the base of the main downland slope below Appuldurcombe Down and rising up over the downland ridge
- Landmark features of Freemantle Gate and the Worsley Obelisk on Appuldurcombe Down
- Large stone wall enclosing the outer park at Appuldurcombe
- Hanger woodlands on the eastern downland slope some of which are ancient woodland
- Important chalk grassland areas in close proximity to acidic grasslands on drift geology gravel and clay with flint deposits
- Hedgerows are present off of the downland but tend to be small except where demarcating tracks

## **Past forces for change**

- Loss of open downland through enclosure
- Loss of chalk grassland through arable cultivation
- Designed landscape influences of Appuldurcombe Park
- Construction of communication masts on the downland ridge
- Environmental Stewardship funding for landscape, nature conservation and historic environmental benefits
- Areas of scrub growth
- Local Nature Reserve management

## **Future forces for change**

- Climate change impacts
- Benefits of continued investment through Environmental Stewardship schemes
- Scrub management
- Changes to the European Agricultural Funds for Rural Development and European funded farm subsidies
- Changes to farm gate prices and agricultural commodity markets
- Potential for arable reversion to chalk grassland
- Public sector investment levels in Local Nature Reserve management

## Condition and Character

The overall condition of the features of this character area is judged to be **good** and the character of the area is judged to be **good**.

## Sensitivities

- Chalk and acid grassland areas
- Panoramic views and general open feel
- Remaining boundary features (hedgerows and the outer park wall)
- Ancient woodland areas
- Historic parkland at Appuldurcombe
- Archeological sites

## Landscape Strategy

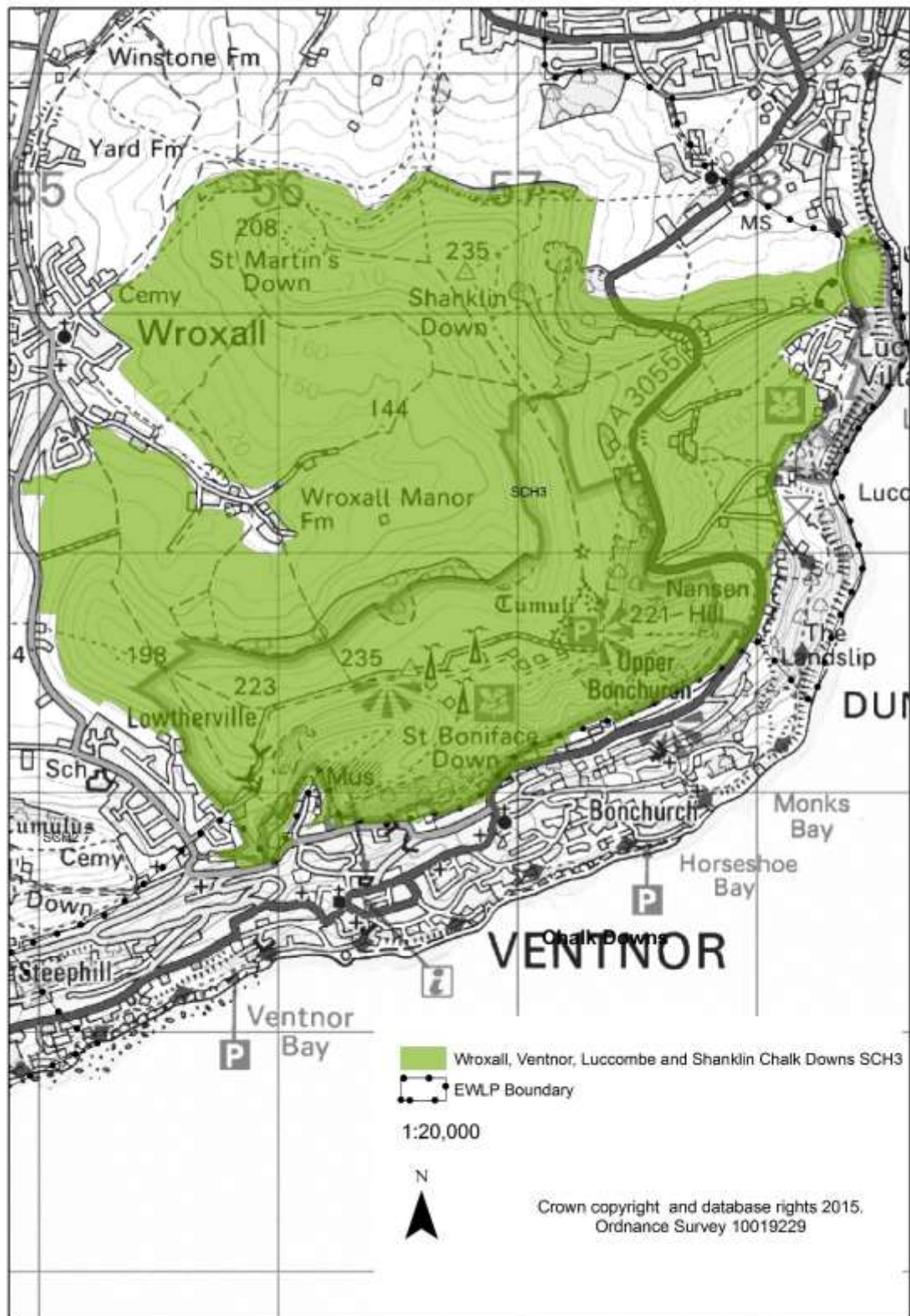
- Conserve and where possible enhance the character and inherent qualities of this character area. These include chalk grassland, acid grassland, scheduled sites and monuments, the parkland at Appuldurcombe and other features which have seen investment through Environmental Stewardship.

## Landscape Guidelines

- Conserve and where possible enhance the ecological interest of the cultivated parts of this landscape area
- Conserve the tranquillity and openness of the area - careful consideration is needed regarding any proposals for alterations or new communication infrastructure and its visual impact
- Conserve remaining ancient woodland areas
- Conserve chalk and acid grassland areas and identify opportunities for restoration and expansion of these target habitats
- Manage scrub
- Conserve historic buildings and their setting
- Conserve scheduled sites and undesignated monuments and archaeological sites



CHARACTER AREA SCH3: WROXALL, VENTNOR, LUCCOMBE AND SHANKLIN SOUTHERN DOWNS



## Location and description

Located in the south of the East Wight this character area extends from the eastern side of the village of Wroxall and Lowtherville (Upper Ventnor) in the west to the edge of Luccombe village in the east and from Cliff Copse in the north to the northern side of the settlements of Ventnor and Bonchurch in the south. The area falls within the civil parishes of Ventnor, Wroxall and Shanklin.

An open landscape with long distance panoramic views of the Island's landscape, Sandown Bay, the mainland coastline and the English Channel. The chalk downland is an imposing backdrop to the town of Ventnor with very steep south facing slopes as mosaic of chalk grassland and secondary woodland (predominantly Holm Oak). The top of the downland sees large tracts of acid grassland and chalk heath due to the clay with flint drift geology cap. Hanger woodlands are found on the steep downland slopes to the east and north of the area and gorse scrub is found in patches across the downland ridge. The partly exposed Upper Greensand cliff demarcates the northern boundary of the area although this is largely shielded from view by tree cover (such as at Cliff Copse). Hedgerows seen as boundary features in the north of the area on the lower downland slopes. There are few hedgerows on the open downland.

The geology of the area consists of Lower Chalk; Upper Greensand; Sandrock Formation; Carstone and Gault. Drift geology in the form of Clay with Flints caps large parts of the tops of the downland and creating acidic conditions alongside the influence of the alkaline chalk locally known as chalk heath. Elevation ranges from between 120 metres and 140 metres above Ordnance Datum on the western, northern and southern edges of the area to around 50 metres above Ordnance Datum in the far east close to Luccombe Chine. At its highest point the area is over 240 metres above Ordnance Datum making it the highest land area on the Isle of Wight.

Almost the entire area falls within the Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty with the exception of small parts of Upper Ventnor in the far west and part of Luccombe in the east.

The Historic Landscape Characterisation indicates an extensive area of open downland which may have been cleared from woodland as early as the Bronze Age. There are also large areas of rough ground. At Luccombe and on the western and southern slopes of St Martin's Down the fields seem to have been enclosed from open field/open field furlongs in the post medieval period. The large fields close to Luccombe Farm were probably enclosed from waste, common or green in the Medieval period. Close to Wroxall Farm in the west the fields have been subdivided during the C20th. The area falls within the South Wight Downland and South Wight Downland Edge Historic Landscape Character Areas. The character area falls within the medieval parishes of Newchurch, Shanklin, Bonchurch and Brading.

Parts of Ventnor Conservation Area lie in the very south of the area. The area itself is largely unsettled with the exception of a few farmsteads, properties on the very edge of Ventnor in the south of the area and at Dunnose near Luccombe. Ventnor Radar station and its various masts and buildings are dominant features on the top of the downland. The following Listed Buildings/Structures are located in the area: Ravenscroft Grade II; Hillside Hotel Grade II; Dunnose Cottage Grade II; Luccombe Farm Grade II; Barn and cartshed at Luccombe Farm Grade II; Milestone Grade II; Ventnor Radar Station Grade II.

There are a number of groups of round barrows on Luccombe Down which are Scheduled Monuments.

With the exception of a few fields close to Wroxall under arable cultivation, the majority of this character area is subject to grazing either extensively (downland ridges) or more intensively close to Wroxall. Large parts of the area are under active conservation with over 75% of the area benefitting from Environmental Stewardship at entry and higher level including a small area in the organic scheme. Large parts of the area are managed by charitable trusts with conservation objectives (National Trust at Ventnor Downs).

The southern part of the downland at Ventnor Downs falls within the Isle of Wight Downs Special Conservation Area, bringing international recognition and protection for its important chalk grassland and chalk heath flora and fauna.

Ventnor Downs is also a Site of Special Scientific Interest giving national protection and recognition for the same reasons. Greatwood and Cliff Copses are also Sites of Scientific Interest rare because of the steep slopes on Upper Greensand influenced by spring lines with unusual plant woodland species existing on thin soils. They are also ancient woodlands. Other ancient woodlands in the area include: Wroxall Copse (also a Site of Interest for Nature Conservation); Luccombe Copse and Lynch Copse (also a Site of Interest for nature Conservation). Other Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation include Ventnor Radar Station; St Martins Down; Pitts Farm Down; Luccombe Chine and Luccombe Common.

Part of the character area falls within the Southern Uplands Biodiversity Opportunity Area with targets for chalk grassland restoration and re-creation and coastal scrub management.

A small area of new woodland planting has taken place close to Greatwood and Cliff Copses.

Public rights of way give access across the area and a large area of open access land is found on Ventnor Downs. Ventnor Downs is accessible by road and has a number of small car park areas. It is a popular area for walkers and those exercising their dogs.

## Key Characteristics

- Open aspect with panoramic views across the Island's landscape, to Sandown Bay, the coastline of the mainland across the top of the village of Bonchurch and town of Ventnor and out to the English Channel
- Dramatic steep south facing slopes a backdrop to Ventnor and Bonchurch
- Holm Oak woodland established since the C19th on the slope of St Boniface Down
- A tranquil area despite the presence of the Ventnor Radar station and its masts
- Chalk grassland and chalk heath habitats and associated species
- Dramatic bluebell stands in the downland in the spring
- Ancient hanger woodlands
- Scheduled barrow sites on Luccombe Down
- Scattered farmsteads at the base of the downland

## Past forces for change

- Loss of open downland through enclosure
- Spread of Holm Oak on the south slopes of St Boniface Down leading to establishment of woodland
- Strategic importance of the high downland for defence leading to the establishment of the Radar Station and masts during WWII
- Scrub growth on chalk heath and steeper downland slopes
- Visitor pressures - car parks, popular linear routes, wildlife disturbance
- Environmental Stewardship funding for landscape, nature conservation and historic environmental benefits

## Future forces for change

- Climate change
- Benefits of continued investment through Environmental Stewardship schemes
- Scrub management
- Changes to European Agricultural Funds for Rural Development and European funded farm subsidies
- Changes to farm gate prices and agricultural commodity markets
- Potential for arable reversion to chalk grassland

## Condition and Character

The overall condition of the features of this character area is judged to be **good** and the character of the area is judged to be **strong**.

## **Sensitivities**

- Chalk grassland and chalk heath habitats
- Panoramic long distance views
- Open aspect and tranquil feel
- Ancient woodlands
- Scheduled monuments, historic sites and listed buildings
- Conservation Area

## **Landscape Strategy**

- Conserve the character and inherent qualities of this character area. These include the chalk grassland and chalk heath habitats, open and tranquil feel of the downland, panoramic long distance views, historic sites and monuments such as the barrows on Luccombe Down and the various listed buildings throughout the area, and all other aspects that have received investment through the Environmental Stewardship scheme.

## **Landscape Guidelines**

- Conserve chalk grassland
- Conserve chalk heath
- Identify opportunities for chalk grassland restoration and re-creation
- Manage visitor pressure at key sites and on well used public rights of way
- Conserve historic sites and monuments

## LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE: CHANGED COUNTRYSIDE



Knighton Sand Pit and Quarry.



Tourism development at Whitecliff Bay.





Conifer hedging planted to provide shelter and screening but now over mature and dominant in landscape.

Subdivision and paraphernalia associated with the keeping of horses.



Solar farm.

This character type describes parts of the East Wight which have seen significant change as a result of development or change away from more traditional countryside uses. This can often result in a move away from the management of remaining features such as hedgerows, woodland and grasslands and an increase in clutter, signage, lighting, noise and general visual intrusion into the wider countryside setting.

The 1994 Landscape Character Assessment for the Isle of Wight highlighted areas across the Island outside of settlements and urban areas which had seen sporadic and urbanising development. These areas were called Landscape Improvement Zones indicating that intervention was desirable to soften their landscape impacts.

The brief for the East Wight Landscape Character Assessment included a remit to revisit the Landscape Improvement Zones and to assess if the same issues and extent of this character type were still relevant in the landscape some twenty years on. It was also tasked with describing the urbanising impacts of these areas in more detail and identifying guidelines which may lessen their impact.

The resulting Changed Countryside Landscape Character Type covers parts of the East Wight where particular clusters of change have altered the areas character. Influences include: amenity use such as for large scale mineral excavation, waste management and landfill; rural located large sized business sites such as garden centres, business/industrial units, attractions; commercial and domestic scale equestrian sites; leisure sites such as golf courses and stadia; solar farms; tourism sites (caravan parks, holiday centres, campsites).

### **Key Characteristics**

- Visually intrusive development distinct from more traditional countryside areas
- Urbanising, noisy, busy and in some cases malodorous impacts
- Potential for nature conservation and landscape character improvement
- Some sites already have strategies for restoration after their current use (quarry sites and solar farms)
- Some changes are controlled through the planning system but others are unregulated

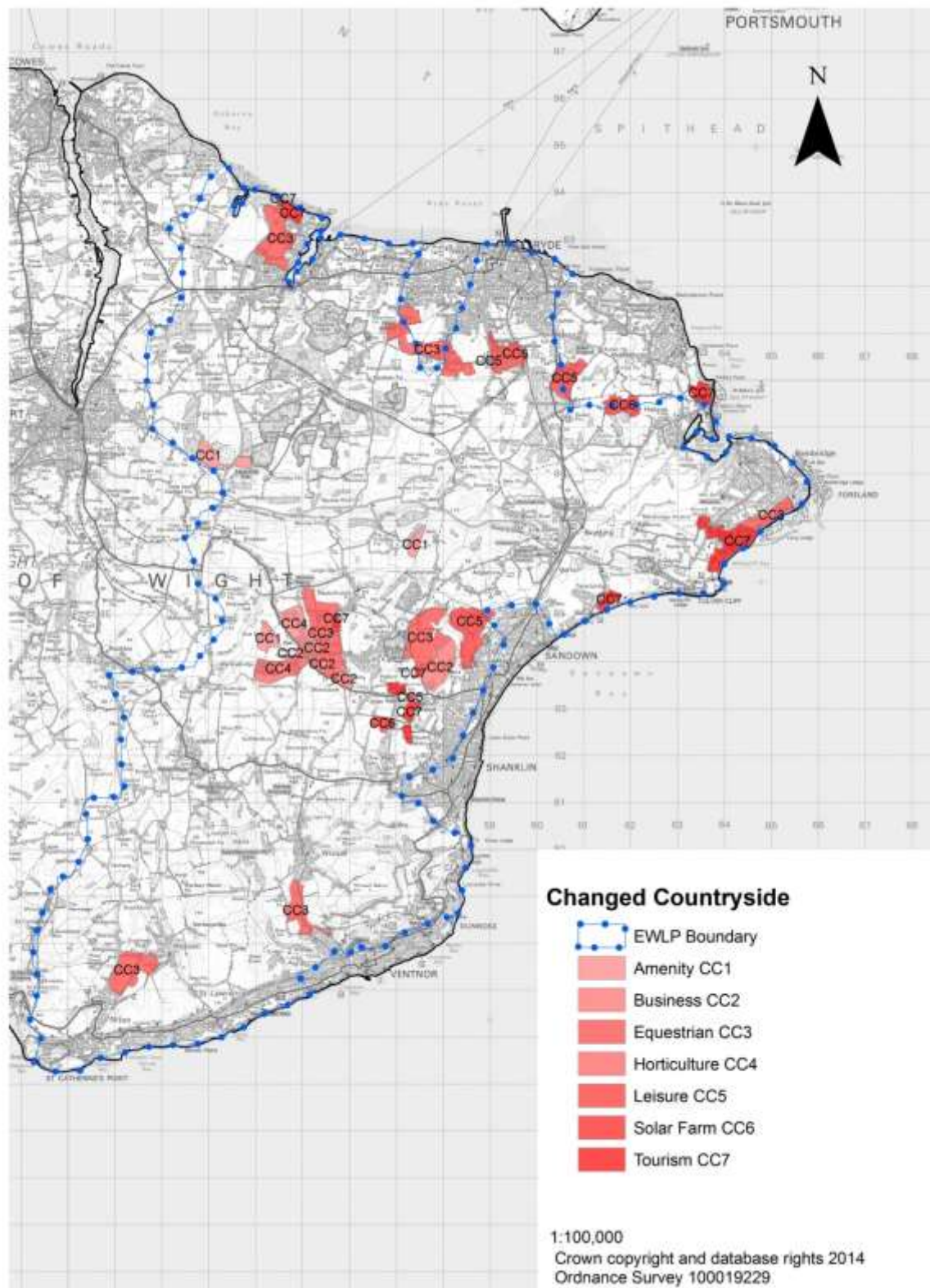
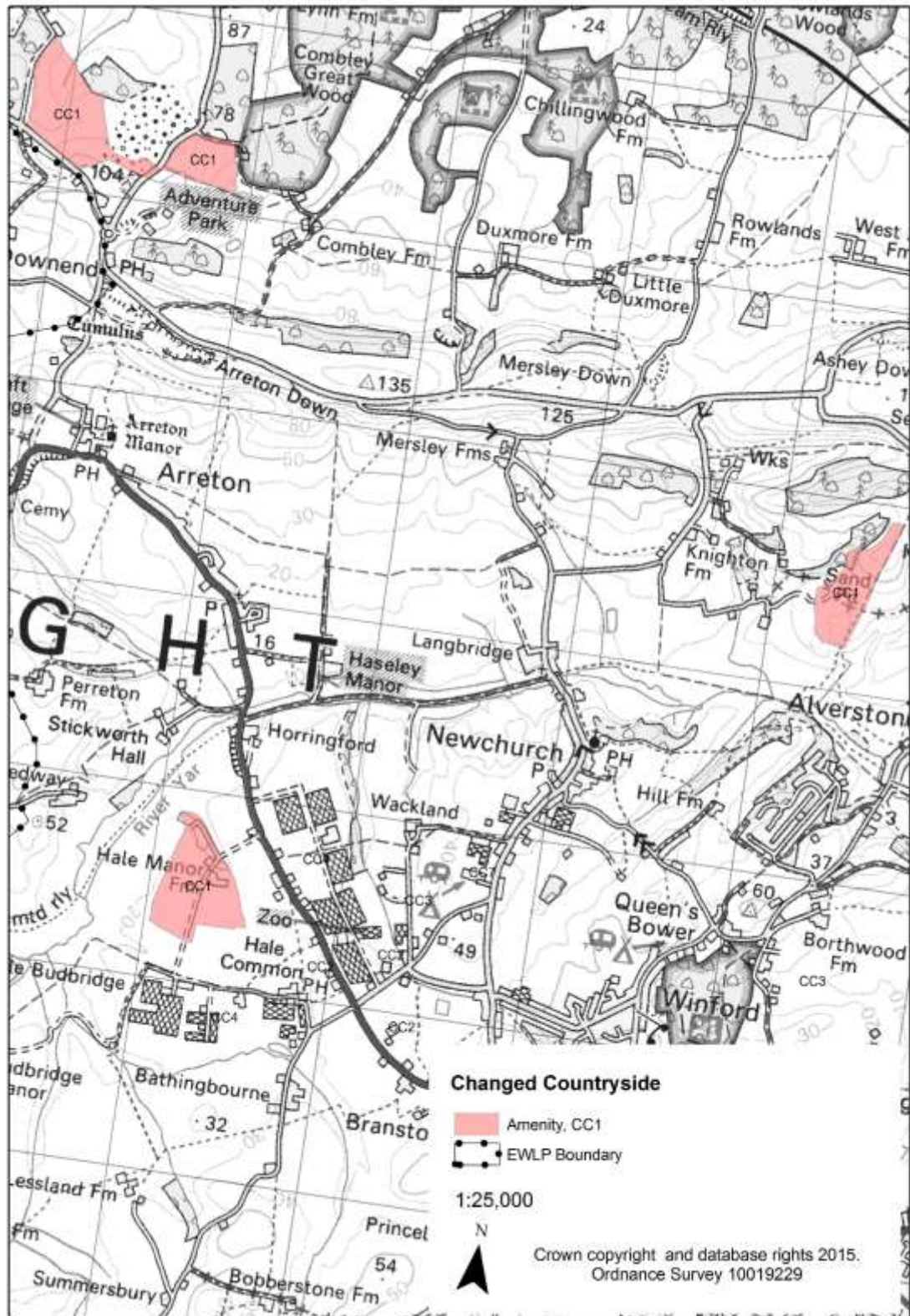


Figure 28: Changed Countryside Landscape Character Areas



## CHARACTER AREA CC1: AMENITY



## Location and description

This character area is located in three places in the East Wight.

The first is in the west of the area at Lynbottom. Here the landscape has changed due to the use of the area for land fill in the Civic Amenity facilities and for waste processing on a private site on the east of the Briddlesford Road. Both sites can be seen from views to the south and the waste processing site can also be seen from views to the east along the Downs Road and from the valley floor below. Significant restoration of former landfill has taken place with the successful establishment of neutral/acid grassland and heathland returning the area to its historic landscape character. The active landfill to the west close to Standen Heath and the main processing area close to Briddlesford Road are urbanising features. Large sheds signage, fencing and areas of hardstanding and road improvements for traffic access are associated with this area all of which have the potential to have an urbanising impact.

The second area is Knighton Sand Pits. This active mineral extraction site has recently been extended northwards and as a result is more visible in the landscape due to the exposure of rocks at higher elevations on the downland slope.

The third area is located close to Hale Manor and is a large gravel/sand excavation works. Other similar works close once exhausted have been used as fishing lakes. Being on fairly flat this area is less visible in wider views.

The geology and elevation of this areas varies due to their dispersed locations in the East Wight. South of the central chalk ridge the sites at Knighton and Hale are taking advantage of the sandstone and river terrace deposits. At Lynbottom the underlying geology includes heavier clays with some Brick Earth drift deposits.

Parts of the Lynbottom and Knighton areas fall within the Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The Historic Landscape Characterisation indicates that land at Hale was enclosed from common, waste or green. At Knighton and Lynbottom the areas would have once been heathland landscapes.

These areas fall within a number of Historic Landscape Character Areas because of their dispersed locations across the East Wight.

A small cluster of Listed Buildings is found at Hale including: Hale Manor Farm Grade II; Granary at Hale Manor Farm Grade II; Barn at Hale Manor Grade II; Barn south of barn to the south west of Hale Manor Grade II; Barn to the south west of Hale Manor Farm Grade II.

Standen Heath is a Site of Interest for Nature Conservation and partly falls within the Lynbottom area.

A small part of the area at Hale falls within the Eastern Yar Valley Biodiversity Opportunity Area indicating its potential to contribute to wetland nature conservation objectives. Parts of this area are also benefitting from Environmental Stewardship.

Some small areas of woodland planting have taken place at Hale and Lynbottom.

### **Key Characteristics**

- Landscapes that have been altered due to their recent use for mineral extraction, waste management and land fill
- Some sites are visible from long distance views and detract from the surrounding countryside
- Exposed geology at mineral sites can create new habitat
- Restoration has taken place at some sites softening their impact and recreating former conditions
- When in active use the sites can be noisy thorough the use of machinery, the sound of seagulls and in the case of the landfill also malodorous
- Sites are providing important amenity for the local community though providing land fill for waste, waste processing and land won mineral materials

### **Past forces for change**

- Loss of habitat through excavation
- Loss of habitat due to landfill
- Restoration of habitat post landfill
- New habitat due to exposure of solid geology or creation of ponds from former mineral extraction sites

### **Future forces for change**

- Pressure for further land fill close to existing facilities
- Possible extension to existing mineral extraction sites
- Increase/decrease in recycling of waste and use/demand for quarried minerals - such as increased housing development and economic conditions
- Potential to realise benefit from new habitats during use and following restoration of sites

### **Condition and Character**

The overall condition of the features of this character area is judged to be **moderate** and the character is judged to be **moderate**.



## **Sensitivities**

- Visual intrusion in relation to surrounding countryside
- Noise and in some cases smell and its resultant impact on tranquillity
- Potential for habitat creation
- Listed buildings

## **Landscape Strategy**

Enhance and restore this landscape character area paying particular attention to softening its visual impact on the landscape and identifying opportunities for creation or restoration of habitats for wildlife.

## **Landscape Guidelines**

- Conserve/recreate heathland
- Consider careful planting of appropriate native tree species to screen views of unsightly facilities in this character area
- Conserve the listed buildings in the area
- Consider and secure opportunities for wildlife, landscape and impacts on the historic environment in any proposals for further similar development in this area

## CHARACTER AREA CC2: BUSINESS



### Changed Countryside

- Business, CC2
- EWLP Boundary

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## Location and description

This character type includes large sites now used for business purposes outside of the main urban and settlement areas. They differ from other rural businesses in that they are located in clusters having a greater landscape impact as a result. There are five distinct sites located within this character area, all of which lie alongside the A3056 between Hale Common in the west and the edge of Merrie Gardens in the east.

The first and largest of the sites includes the airfield and hangars at the Isle of Wight Airport (Sandown). A number of businesses operate from this site and the air strip itself, although grass, is kept cut short and appears as a well manicured area in contrast to the adjacent countryside. The large hangars are a prominent feature in the landscape although landscaping has been attempted to screen this from views to the north. Pleasure flights operate from the area. The north of this area falls within the Eastern Yar Valley Biodiversity Opportunity Area.

The second area is the Dalverton Garden Centre on the south side of Newport Road. This development is a purpose built garden centre with associated car parking.

The third area comprises the Spring Bank Nurseries site a smaller nursery with glasshouses and polythene tunnels, William Hall Funeral Directors and a Springwood Woodland burial site.

The fourth site is the Jubilee Garden Centre at Branstone, consisting of glasshouses and outdoor display space. Past shelterbelt/screening planting included the use of Leylandii hedging which had become very tall and imposing in the landscape. Recently high winds have damaged these and a number have now been removed.

The fifth site includes a number of businesses in one area. Thompsons Garden Centre is located in a large former commercial market garden greenhouse with further outside display space; Amazon World is a wildlife themed attraction in a purpose built structures; the Fighting Cocks pub has recently been extended and finally the former Fighting Cocks Nursery a series of glasshouses which have been empty for a number of years.

The underlying geology for these areas consists of River Terrace and Alluvium drift deposits and Ferruginous Sands. Elevation ranges from around 10 metres to 40 metres above Ordnance Datum.

The Historic Landscape Characterisation tells us that these sites would have been enclosed from waste/common or green for arable and pasture use prior to be developed.

## Key Characteristics

- Business premises
- Signage, parking and landscaping can have an impact on the rural character of the area
- Former market gardening greenhouses are often the main buildings for garden centres in the area

## Past forces for change

- Development of sites for business purposes
- Planting of Leylandii (Leyland Cypress) as a rapidly growing hedge to screen sites (particularly large sheds and glasshouses)
- Economic conditions and the pressure this places on business viability

## Future forces for change

- Loss of shelter trees as they mature and choices made for replacement landscaping
- Economic conditions and the pressure this places on business viability
- Possible redevelopment of sites or change of use
- The Isle of Wight Airport site falls within the wider 'The Bay' Area Action Plan area

## Condition and Character

The overall condition of the features of this character area is judged to be **moderate** and the character of the area is judged to be **moderate**.

## Sensitivities

- Rural location requiring an appropriate approach to signage, lighting, open space and landscaping management

## Landscape Strategy

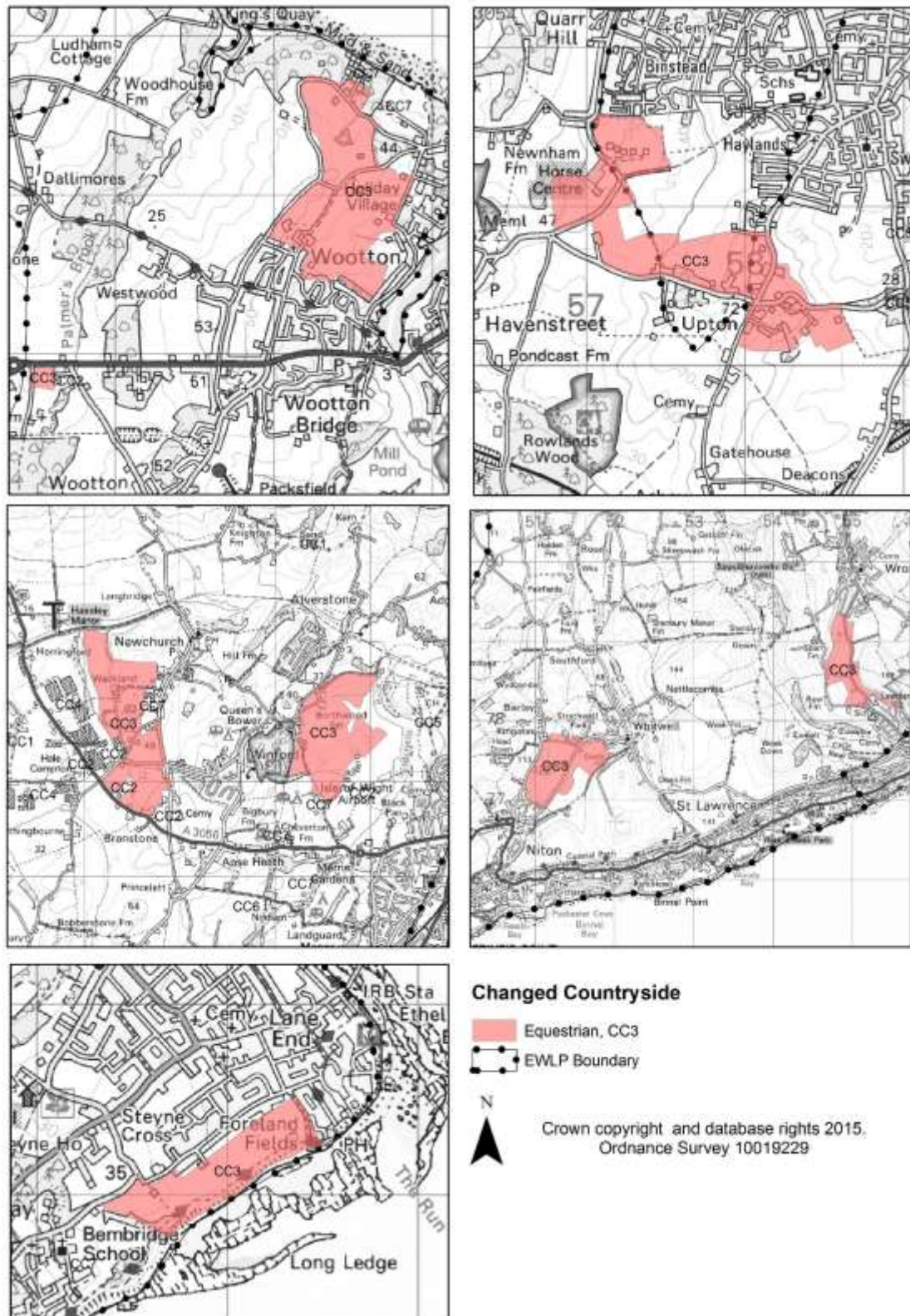
- Enhance the character of the area by working with businesses to soften any adverse visual impact or urbanising effect of signage, lighting, parking provision, and open space and landscaping approaches.

## **Landscape Guidelines**

- Work with businesses to maximise any opportunities to soften adverse visual impacts, and retain or create habitats for wildlife on their premises.
- Enhance the area by addressing any adverse visual impact of past attempts to screen sites by encouraging the management or replacement of Leylandii planting
- Carefully consider the impact of signage, lighting and car parking provision on the rural character of the surrounding area



## CHARACTER AREA CC3: EQUESTRIAN





## **Location and description**

Equestrian development is an established feature of many parts of the East Wight landscape. Where there are particular concentrations of domestic and commercial based equestrian activities they can have the effect of altering the character of the countryside. A number of clusters of such development have been identified in this landscape character assessment all of which share the same basic features.

Underlying geology does not seem to have a particular bearing on this particular character area as sites are located on both heavier clay and more free draining sandy soils. The key factor seems to be their peri-urban location on the edge of settlements including Niton, Upper Ventnor, Wootton Bridge, Binstead, Ryde, Hale Common, and Alverstone.

Such development becomes more conspicuous in the landscape when clustered together with fields being sub divided by electrified paddock tape, the erection of field shelters and stabling, the construction of maneges for all weather exercise and the presence of other forms of horse keeping equipment. Standards of pasture management can vary with some sites being over grazed and at risk of poaching and others being better managed with lower grazing rates and the control of rank grassland species.

## **Key Characteristics**

- Pastoral fields often sub-divided with highly visible paddock tape
- Presence of field shelters, stables, manure piles, hard standings, and other equestrian paraphernalia
- Can appear cluttered and urbanising in the landscape
- The areas have the ability to contribute to grassland management for the benefit of grassland species

## **Past forces for change**

- Increase in popularity of horse ownership for enjoyment and leisure pastime
- Pressure for individual facilities over commercial livery and riding schools
- Often located in areas previously used for more extensive agricultural grazing and close to settlement
- Sub division of fields
- Erection of temporary or permanent structures such as field shelters and stabling
- Good and bad examples of pasture management
- Traditional approaches to enclosure are often neglected in favour of use of temporary tape which can lead to reduced hedgerow management

### **Future forces for change**

- Changes to levels of horse ownership
- Economic conditions and affordability of horse ownership and upkeep
- Land availability

### **Condition and Character**

The overall condition of the features of this character area are judged to be **moderate** and the overall character of the area is judged to be **moderate**.

### **Sensitivities**

- Visual impact of equestrian development on surrounding countryside
- Grassland/pasture management
- Hedgerow management

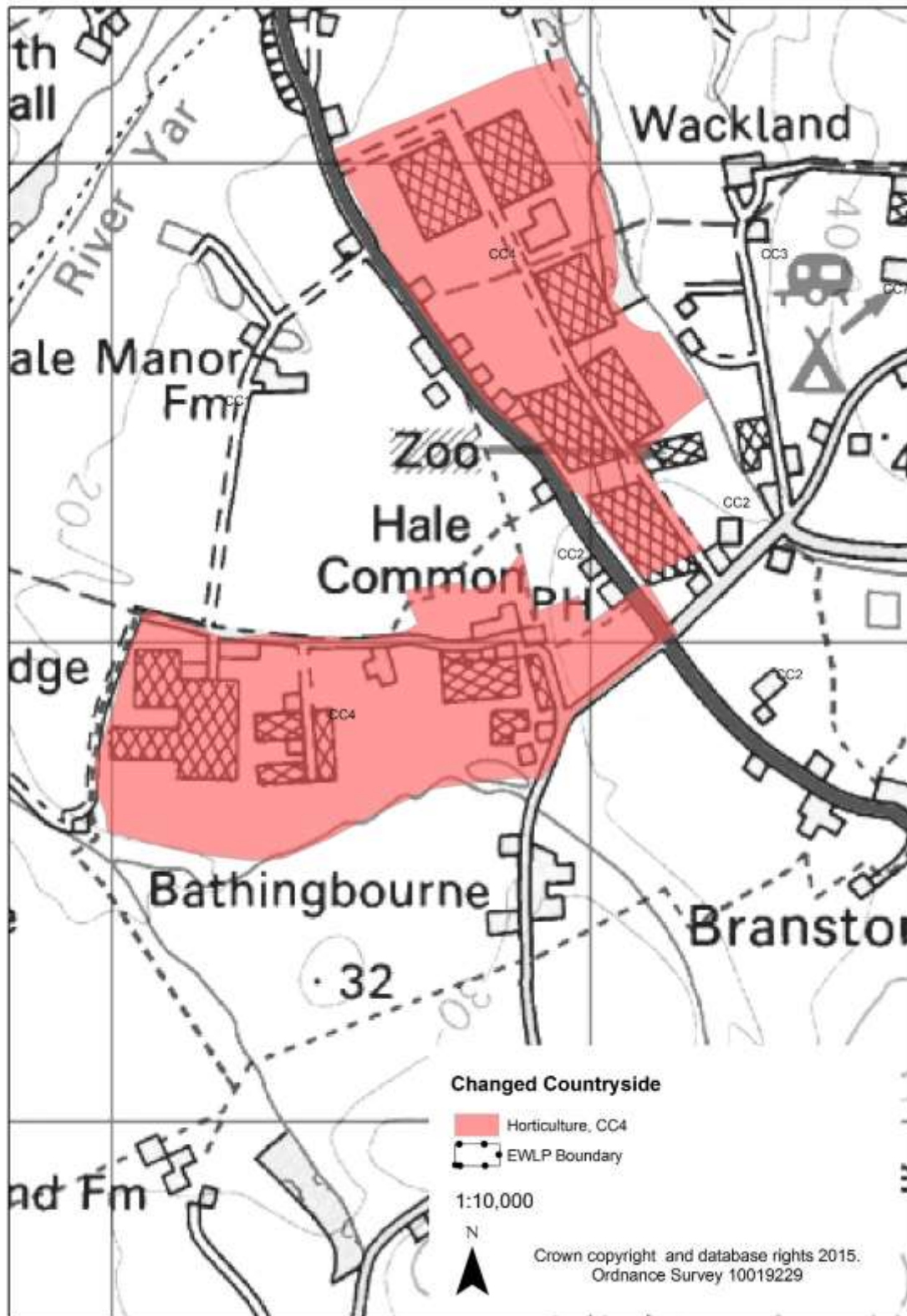
### **Landscape Strategy**

- Enhance the visual character and nature conservation potential of this character area by working with the horse keeping community to identify ways to benefit these as part of equestrian development in the area.

### **Landscape Guidelines**

- Conserve and enhance the management of existing hedgerows
- Identify best practice in horse keeping pasture/grassland management to realise nature conservation benefits
- Careful siting of any structures and other paraphernalia to avoid visual prominence and to take advantage of natural topography and vegetation for screening. Skyline locations should in particular be avoided





## Location and description

Visually prominent in the wider East Wight landscape especially from downland areas to the south and north this character area is located in the Arreton Valley close to Hale Common. These large blocks of commercial glasshouses have been a feature of the area since the 1970s built to take advantage of the good soils and high light levels of the area for the growing of market garden crops. A natural progression from the smaller market gardens of the surrounding area established in the C19th, these large scale commercial units have seen the cultivation of both flowers and fruits and in recent years have focussed on tomato and chilli production to supply supermarkets. One block is found on the eastern side of the A3056 at Hale Common and the other close by off of Macketts Lane.

When first built there was an attempt in some locations to screen the large structures from close view through the planting of shelter belts and fast growing Leylandii hedging. Whilst this has obscured the glasshouses it has itself become a very dominant feature in the landscape. Recent attempts have been made to manage this with the removal of some overly mature trees and attempts to control their growth through cutting. More recent planting of bands of woodland may be a more successful approach once they have matured.

## Key Characteristics

- Large blocks of commercial glasshouses in active cultivation
- Large Leylandii hedges originally planted to screen the structures have become a dominant landscape feature in their own right
- A major feature in long distance views to the Arreton Valley from higher downland to the north and south
- Important rural businesses providing jobs and food for supply to the supermarkets

## Past forces for change

- Expansion of glasshouses from the 1970s to the 2000s
- Use of Leylandii species for screening hedgerows

## Future forces for change

- Further expansion of glasshouses in the local area
- Economic factors effecting the commercial glasshouse crop cultivation
- Management and/or replacement of Leylandii hedges as they become mature

## Condition and Character

The overall condition of the features of this character area is judged to be **moderate** and the character of the area is judged to be **moderate**.

## **Sensitivities**

- Dominance of the appearance of these commercial structures on the surrounding countryside
- Dominance of the appearance of Leylandii hedges on the surrounding countryside

## **Landscape Strategy**

- Enhance the landscape and nature conservation interest of this character area by working with businesses to consider how best to screen structures from view and how to conserve and enhance wildlife habitats.

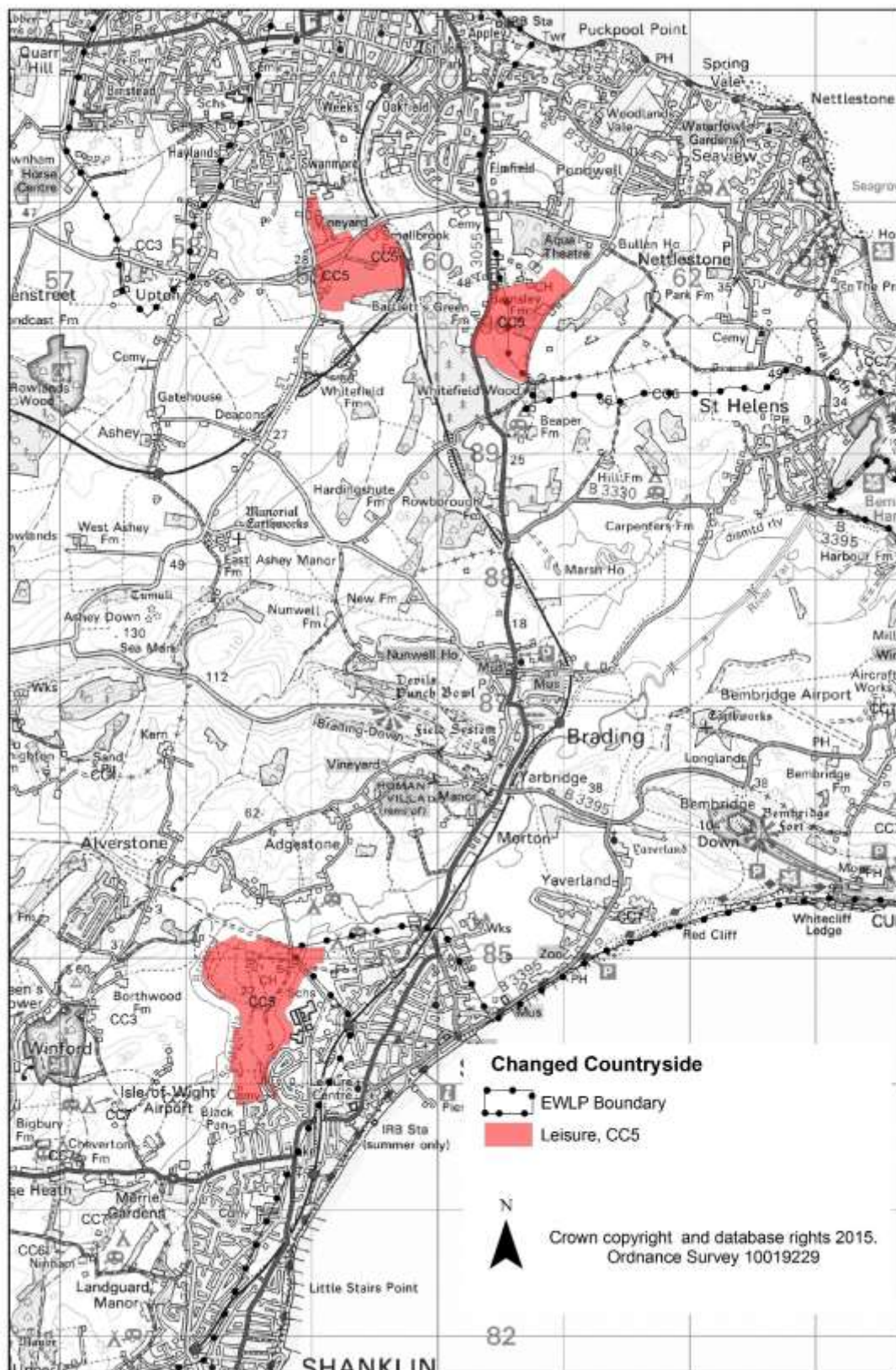
## **Landscape Guidelines**

- Identify alternatives to Leylandii use for screening of structures from close views such as the use of native species woodland planting
- Encourage the conservation and enhancement of habitat for wildlife on the periphery of sites





## CHARACTER AREA CC5: LEISURE



## Location and description

This character area represents changed countryside which has been altered for commercial leisure activities. It includes Westridge 9 hole Golf Course and driving range built and club house on the former Ryde Airport site south of the town of Ryde; Shanklin and Sandown 18 hole Golf Course and club house located at Golf Links Road west of Sandown Academy and the Smallbrook Stadium close to Smallbrook south of Ryde.

The more open nature of the two golf courses and their retention of trees, woodland and rough grassland continue to provide a range of habitats for wildlife. Shanklin and Sandown Golf Course is partially a Site of Interest for Nature Conservation for its wetland, heathland and grassland interest. Part of the golf course also lies within the Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Smallbrook Stadium consists of a large trackway, playing fields and various indoor facilities. It is the host venue for the annual Isle of Wight Scooter Rally.

All sites are crossed by public rights of way.

## Key Characteristics

- Use for formal sporting and leisure activities
- Mosaic of habitats of potential benefit to wildlife (particularly the golf courses)
- Smallbrook stadium sees occasional activities with high noise and traffic having temporary impact on the tranquillity of the area

## Past forces for change

- Change from an airfield to golf course at Westridge
- Change from open common at Lake for the formation of the Shanklin and Sandown Golf Course in the late C19th
- Change from pastoral fields at Smallbrook with the building of the Stadium in the 1980s

## Future forces for change

- Possible impact on Smallbrook of adjacent Pennyfeathers development proposals

## Condition and Character

The overall condition of the features of this character area is judged to be **moderate** and the character is judged to be **moderate**.

## **Sensitivities**

- Remaining areas of value as wildlife habitats (particularly at the two golf courses)

## **Landscape Strategy**

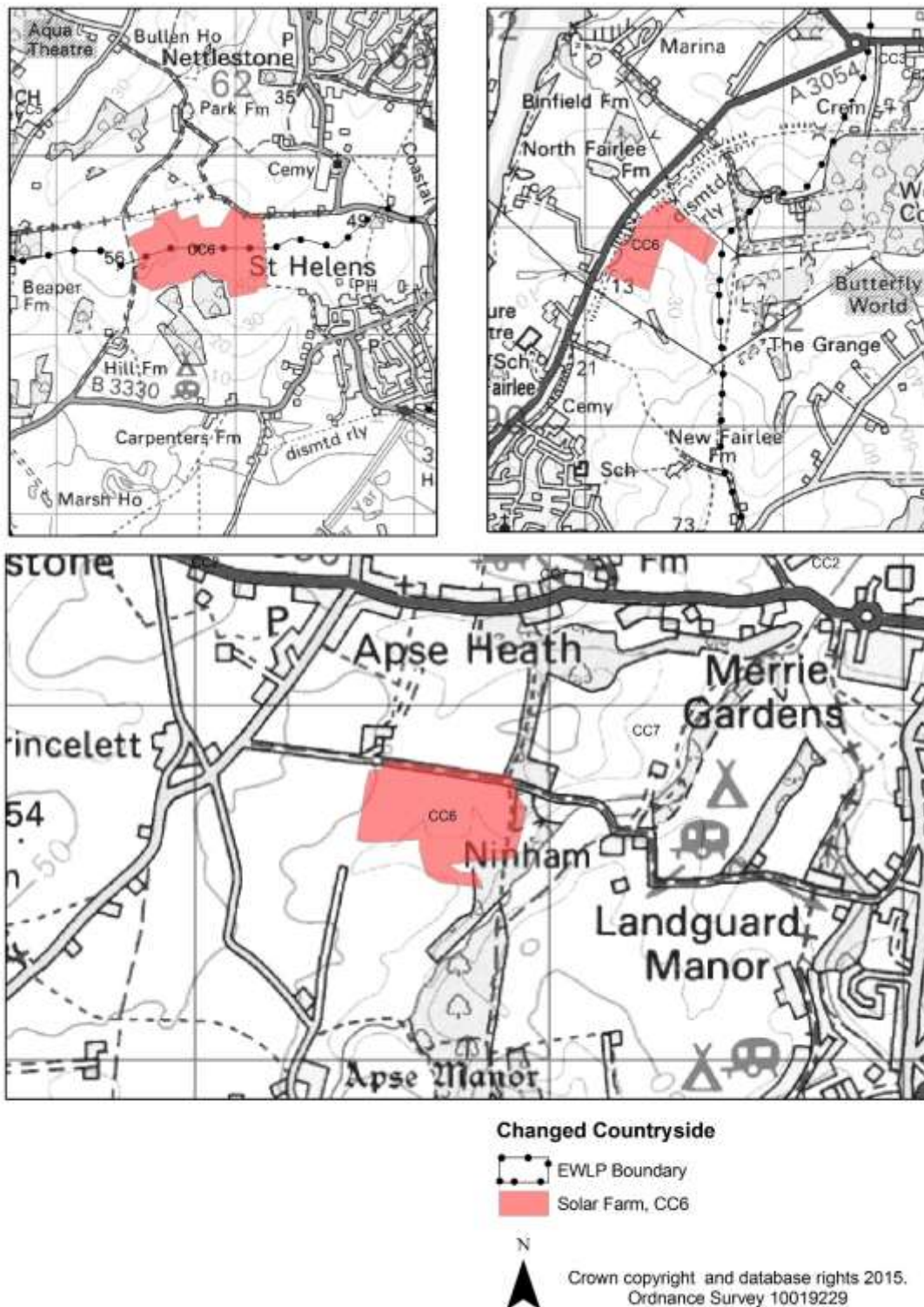
Enhance the nature conservation value of this character area, these include grassland, heathland and wetland areas, by working with the leisure based businesses operating in the area.

## **Landscape Guidelines**

- Maximise the potential of wildlife habitats in the area



## CHARACTER AREA CC6: SOLAR FARMS





## **Location and description**

In the last few years there has been a new form of development seen in the countryside. Solar Farms see the construction of banks of solar arrays to capture the energy of sunlight and convert it to electricity. Fencing, cabinets and security systems are also a feature of this character area. There are two such areas within the East Wight.

The first is located close to Hill Farm near St Helens in the north east of the area and the second is located close to Apse New Barn Farm near Apse Heath. Both these sites have consent with the condition of a requirement to remove all equipment and return the sites to previous agricultural use after 12 months in operation or after 25 years of operation. There are also conditions set in relation to the ecology of the sites and how to maximise its value for wildlife whilst the solar arrays are in operation.

The Hill Farm site is fairly well hidden from long distance views in the landscape being sited on the brow of a hill and well screened by existing hedgerows and woodland areas. The Apse Heath scheme is more visible in the landscape particularly from views from the downland to the south.

## **Key Characteristics**

- Fields of solar arrays with an industrial appearance
- Important wildlife habitat under the equipment and in relation to surrounding hedgerows

## **Past forces for change**

- Prior to the recent development of these sites as solar farms they were actively used as farmland, both were subject to arable cultivation. The area at Hill Farm was within an Environmental Stewardship scheme for entry level and higher level options.

## **Future forces for change**

- This will largely be driven by the conditions on the planning consents for the two Solar Farms. This clearly states that if the equipment becomes in operable for more than 12 months or after the 25 year term of the consent, all equipment must be removed and the land returned to its original agricultural use.
- Potential wildlife gains through establishment of grassland habitats below the arrays and through management of adjacent hedgerows.

## **Condition and Character**

The overall condition of the features of this character area is judged to be **moderate** and the character of the area is judged to be **moderate**.

## **Sensitivities**

- Wildlife habitats at array sites
- Long distance views towards the sites and their impact on the surrounding landscape

## **Landscape Strategy**

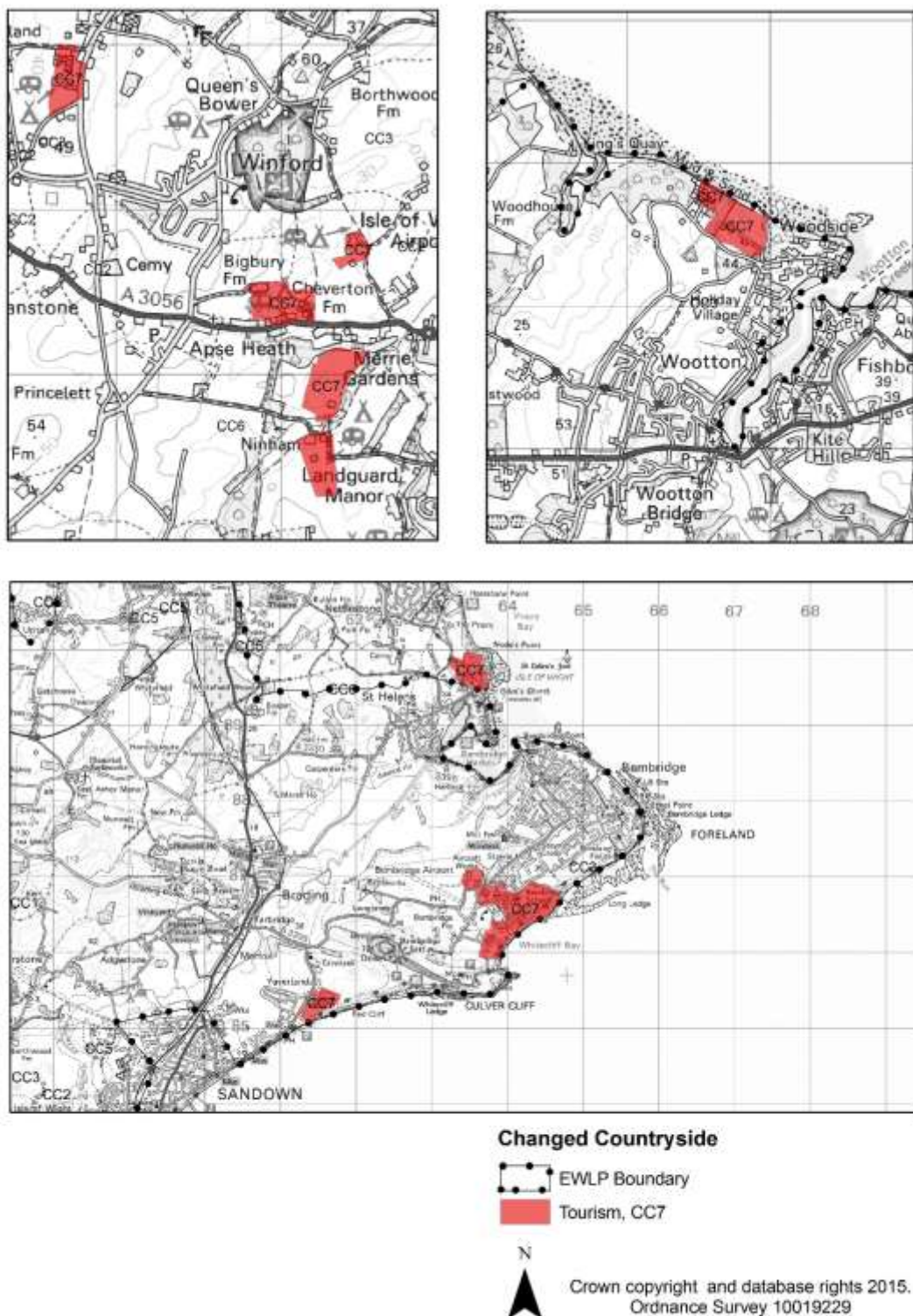
- Ensure that conditions on the consent for solar farm developments are monitored and enforced to benefit wildlife and protect landscape character

## **Landscape Guidelines**

- Monitor the wildlife value of sites recently converted to use as solar arrays
- Ensure sites discharge the required conditions on their planning consents to ensure benefit to wildlife and to protect landscape character



## CHARACTER AREA CC7: TOURISM



## Location and description

Tourism is an important part of the economy of the Isle of Wight and the East Wight area has a long tradition of attracting visitors to its coastline and countryside. Many tourism businesses are small scale and are dispersed throughout the area. In some areas tourism development has taken place in a more intensive way and the establishment of holiday parks, campsites and caravan parks can appear as dominant features in the landscape, particularly when very busy. Whilst offering an important tourism accommodation resource the choice of layout, landscaping and livery of permanent tourist chalets, caravans, lodges and cabins can have a major impact on a sites appearance in the wider landscape.

This Changed Countryside character area captures those larger sites many of which can be seen from the surrounding countryside. There are two distinct clusters of these sites, the first take advantage of a coastal aspect (Woodside Wootton; Nodes St Helens; Whitecliff Bay and Hillway, Bembridge and the outdoor activities centre at the former Bembridge School site, Sandown Bay) and the second is found inland from Sandown Bay into the Arreton Valley (Ninham; Cheverton Copse; Village Way; Cheverton Farm; Southlands).

Underlying geology varies with those north of the central chalk ridge on the heavier clay soils and drift tidal and river terrace geology and those south of the chalk ridge on the free draining sandstones.

There are a number of listed buildings within this character area including: Cheverton Farm Barn Grade II; Cheverton Farmhouse Grade II; Bembridge School House and New House Grade II; The Chapel at Bembridge School Grade II; Merryweather and Stone Cottage Grade II.

The areas at Whitecliff Bay and Sandown Bay fall within the Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The sites located along the coastline are often located in or next to important nature conservation and geological areas. Sandown Bay Holiday Centre falls partly within the South Wight Maritime Special Area of Conservation and also partly within the Bembridge Down Site of Special Scientific Interest. Whitecliff Bay and Bembridge School are located partly within the Bembridge School & Cliffs and Whitecliff Bay & Bembridge Ledges Sites of Special Scientific Interest. The beach and wooded coastline at Woodside falls within the King's Quay to Wootton Creek SSSI.

There are many small areas of ancient woodland within or on the edges of this character area particularly along the northern coastline. These include Wallishill Copse; Woodside Copse; Curlews Copse; Horse Grounds Copse; Breaches Copse and Steyne Copse. Most of these are also Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation. Nodes Point Meadow is an important grassland SINC site.

The Yaverland Fort is within the Sandown Bay Holiday Centre area and is a scheduled monument. Built in the late C19th to defend the coastline and Sandown Bay from attack by the French this important historic site is on the English Heritage 'Heritage at Risk' list as the crenel wall has partially collapsed and there is vegetative growth on the structure.

Nodes Battery whilst not scheduled is another interesting historic defence site located within a holiday park complex.

### **Key Characteristics**

- Busy sites with increased use during the summer season
- Some sites are very visually prominent in long distance views from surrounding countryside
- Non touring accommodation has a more permanent landscape
- Often adjacent to or contain sites of nature conservation value and importance
- Hedgerows and woodland areas may predate tourism use and are important historic features and wildlife habitats
- Historic structures are found on some sites (Nodes Battery, Yaverland Fort)

### **Past forces for change**

- Increased popularity of holiday park and caravan and camping holidays leading to expansion of sites
- Choices for the livery of new permanent accommodation units and the resultant impact on the sites prominence in the surrounding landscape
- Some sites have seen changes to more permanent residential occupation in some units and others have been abandoned (at Lower Woodside, Wootton Bridge)

### **Future forces for change**

- Further expansion of sites
- Impact of changes in the domestic and overseas holiday market and its impact on choice of destination and accommodation
- Modernisation of existing stock and choices made regarding landscaping and livery
- Coastal erosion at those sites along the coastline
- Potential worsening of the condition or loss of Yaverland Battery

### **Condition and Character**

The overall condition of this character area is judged to be **moderate** and the character of the area is judged to be **moderate**.



## **Sensitivities**

- Nature conservation importance of habitats within and immediately adjacent to these sites particularly those located along the coastline
- Visibility of sites from surrounding countryside particularly where located close to higher ground with its vantage points (such as Whitecliff Bay and Sandown Bay)
- Importance of the potential positive impact of sensitive approaches to layouts and siting, landscaping, and livery

## **Landscape Strategy**

- Recognise the important contribution made by these sites to the Isle of Wight tourism offer whilst also encouraging approaches which will maximise the conservation and enhancement of wildlife and historic sites and minimising adverse visual impacts on the surrounding landscape.

## **Landscape Guidelines**

- Work with tourism businesses and visitors to raise awareness of the nature conservation, historic environment and landscape value of the tourism sites and the surrounding areas
- Identify ways to realise the potential of these sites for wildlife and for the conservation and enhancement of historic features within these sites
- Encourage landscaping and consideration of the choice of livery of permanent structures on sites that have high visibility from the surrounding landscape

## LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE: COASTAL DESIGNED LANDSCAPES



Sandham Grounds public park at Sandown.



View towards parkland and house at Woodlands Vale near Seaview.



Culver Parade at Yaverland looking towards Sandown and Shanklin.

Appley Park, Ryde.



Former Harcourt Sands site and former site of St Clare near Puckpool.

This Landscape Character Type describes parts of the East Wight coastline which have been heavily influenced through the establishment of designed landscapes such as private landscaped gardens, public open spaces such as parks and esplanades or parades or which were formerly part of a designed landscape but have since been redeveloped for another purpose.

'Designed Landscapes' are defined by English Heritage as 'landscapes created to provide aesthetically pleasing settings for private houses, institutions and facilities'. This Landscape Character Type is specifically focussed on Designed Landscape in the coastal areas of the East Wight and in particular the northern coastline.

Designed landscapes can also be found in other parts of the East Wight landscape including those associated with landscaped parks and country houses such as Appuldurcombe and Nunwell; those associated with smaller marine villas and cottages ornés away from the north coast with a particular concentration found in the Undercliff. There are also many town and urban public parks and open spaces within the coastal resort towns of the East Wight. Many of these fall within urban areas as defined by the Island Plan's settlement boundaries and as such have not been included in this character type. Exceptions to this are the Esplanade in Ryde and Culver Parade in Sandown both of which lie outside of the defined settlement boundary.

### **Key Characteristics**

- Designed landscape for either private or public enjoyment associated closely with its coastal setting
- Some areas are fully publically accessible being designed with that purpose in mind, others have evolved as public space from previously private designed landscapes and some remain as private gardens for Marine Villas
- Some sites have changed to another purpose such as a golf course or holiday park (currently abandoned)
- In all cases designed elements still remain



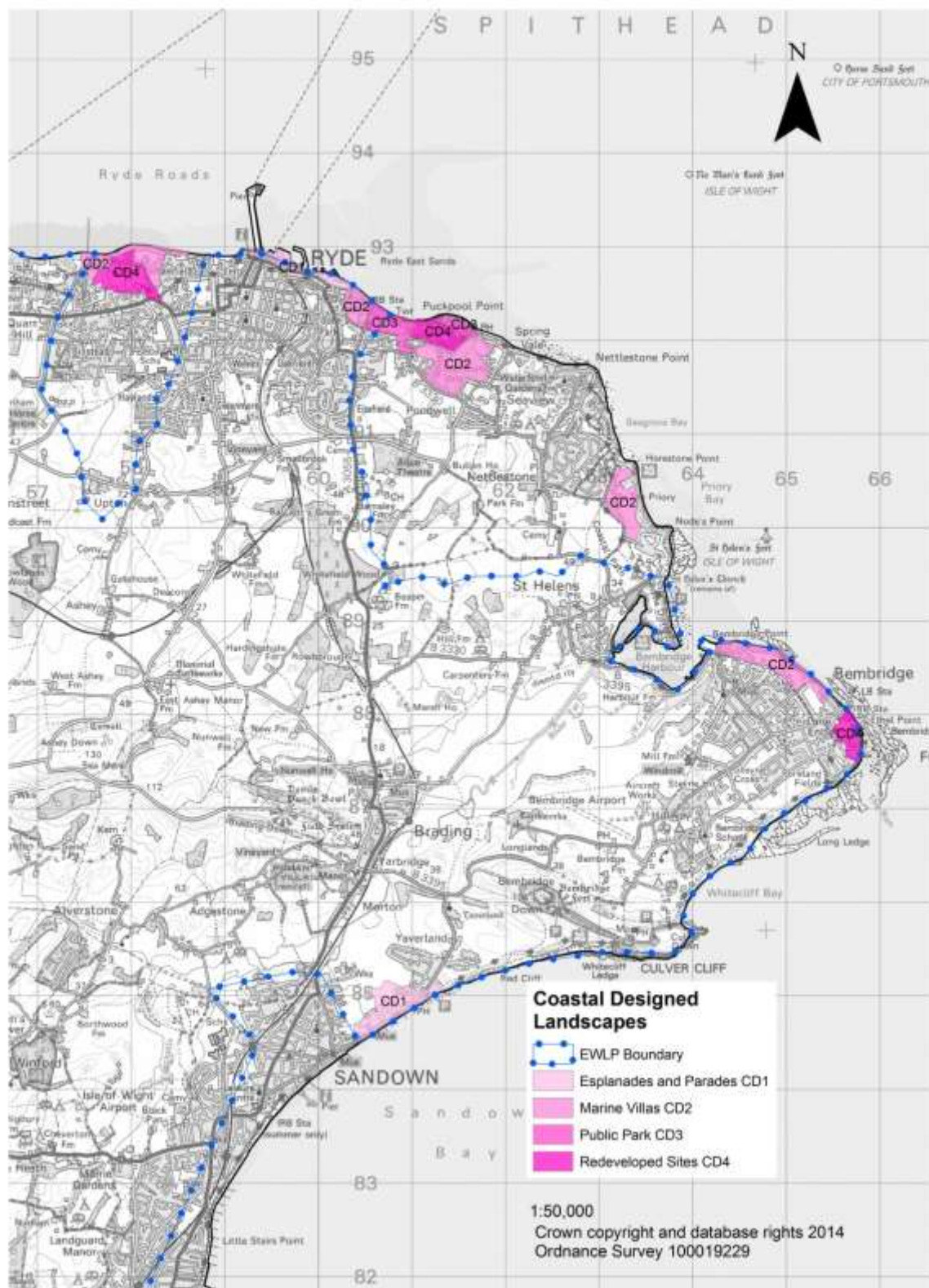
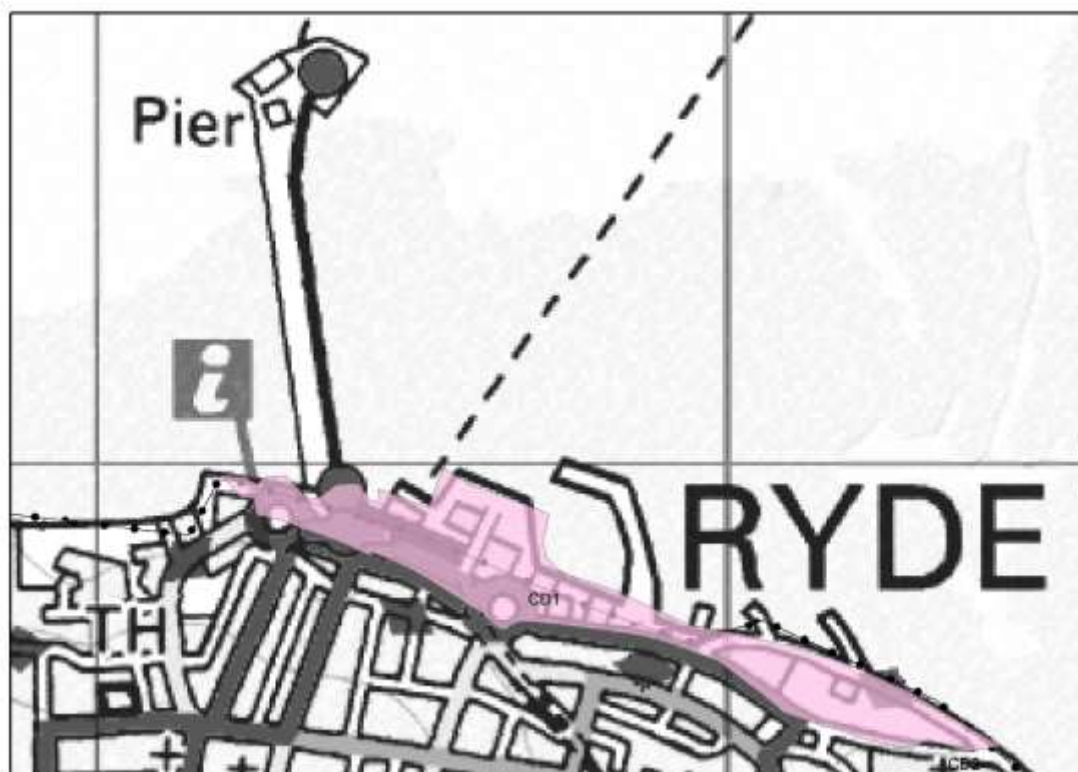


Figure 29: Coastal Designed Landscape Character Areas

## CHARACTER AREA CD1: ESPLANADES AND PARADES



### Coastal Designed Landscapes

- Esplanades and Parades, CD1
- EWLP Boundary

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## Location and description

Located in two areas of the East Wight at Ryde and on the edge of Sandown, this character area has been specifically designed for the public enjoyment of coastal areas. This includes walkways, seats, shelters, bandstands, open grassed areas, planted flower beds, activities such as boating, bowling, miniature golf and small businesses such as cafes, and attractions. The areas are very low lying being at or just above sea level with large areas being formed from reclaimed land.

The Esplanade at Ryde extends from Western Gardens near St Thomas' Street in the west eastwards along the Esplanade to the end of the Ryde Canoe Lake which was built on reclaimed land in the east. The whole area is roughly at sea level with large parts being reclaimed from the adjacent Ryde Sands during the C19th and C20th. The area was built to take advantage of the spectacular sandy beaches and views to the mainland coast and is backed to the south by the town of Ryde. A busy area including the Ryde Interchange of Ryde Esplanade Railway Station and Bus Station, the Hoverport for the Ryde to Southsea Hovercraft service, Ryde Arena and parking, and Ryde Marina. Eastern Gardens includes the Pavillion a Grade II cast iron listed building built in the 1920s, a bowling green, planted ornamental gardens and a Pulhamite fountain. It falls within the Ryde and Ryde St John's Conservation Areas. Ryde Pier is a dominant Grade II listed local landmark still in use and recently celebrating its 200th anniversary. The beach falls within the Solent and Southampton Water Special Conservation Area and Ramsar site internationally important as a wetland particularly for bird species. The same area falls within the Ryde Sands and Wootton Creek Site of Special Scientific Interest. Ryde Canoe Lake is a Site of Interest for Nature Conservation. Investment in public realm took place in the 2000s as part of the Ryde Townscape Heritage Initiative. There remains a strong C19th and early C20th influence on the features in the area although a number more modern structures have also been built (Ryde Arena).

In Sandown the area extends from Sandham Grounds in the west to Yaverland Car Park in the east. Roughly at sea level with the extensive wetland areas of Sandown Levels inland. It includes the public gardens at Sandham Grounds with their planted gardens, miniature golf, bowling green and tennis courts built on the site of the Sandham Fort a C17th fortification the shape of which can still be traced in the boundary. Other elements include the 1930s Canoe/Boating lake and Brown's Golf Course which includes the Grade II listed PLUTO (Pipe Line Under The Ocean) power station; Dinosaur Isle, an imposing modern design, which was built with Millennium funding and houses the Isle of Wight Geology Museum and an exhibition about the importance of the Isle of Wight as a location for the discovery of fossilised remains; the now derelict and soon to be redeveloped Grand Hotel; Sandown Palmerstonian Fort now home to the Isle of Wight Zoo and in the far east of the area a large public car park next to Yaverland Sailing and Boat Club. Part of the beach in the very east of the area falls within the South Wight Maritime Special Area of

Conservation and within the Bembridge Down Site of Special Scientific Interest. Sandown Levels are a Site of Interest for Nature Conservation and are on the edge of the area. A small part of the area close to the Sandown Levels also falls within the Eastern Yar Valley Biodiversity Opportunity Area. The very east of the area lies within the Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. There are many 1920s/30s elements remaining in the area although some have been lost and others are planned to be redeveloped in the near future.

### **Key Characteristics**

- Public realm designed to take advantage of coastal location including planted flower beds, grassed areas, walkways, shelters and seats
- Busy, bright and colourful with attractions, cafes and other visitor facilities
- Ryde is particularly busy due to the location of the Ryde Interchange and Hoverport

### **Past forces for change**

- Reclamation of land for the building of promenades, parades, seawalls, and parking areas
- C19th and early C20th tourism related development reflecting the increasing popularity of these coastal towns
- Changes in tourism market from the late C20th resulting in pressure on the viability of some facilities, attractions and businesses

### **Future forces for change**

- Reducing public sector resources and the impact on the upkeep of public open spaces and ornamental plantings
- Decrease or increase in visitor numbers and the impact on business growth or viability
- Changes to visitor expectations and impact on existing businesses and facilities
- Possible redevelopment of sites to match changing markets and as a result of the objectives of emerging Area Action Plans of the Island Plan
- Uncertainty over the future of Ryde Arena

### **Condition and Character**

The overall condition of the features of this character area is judged to be **moderate** and the overall character is judged to be **strong**.

## **Sensitivities**

- Public realm including areas of open space, flower bed planting, street furniture, and paved areas
- Historic features and buildings reflecting the development of the publically accessible designed landscapes

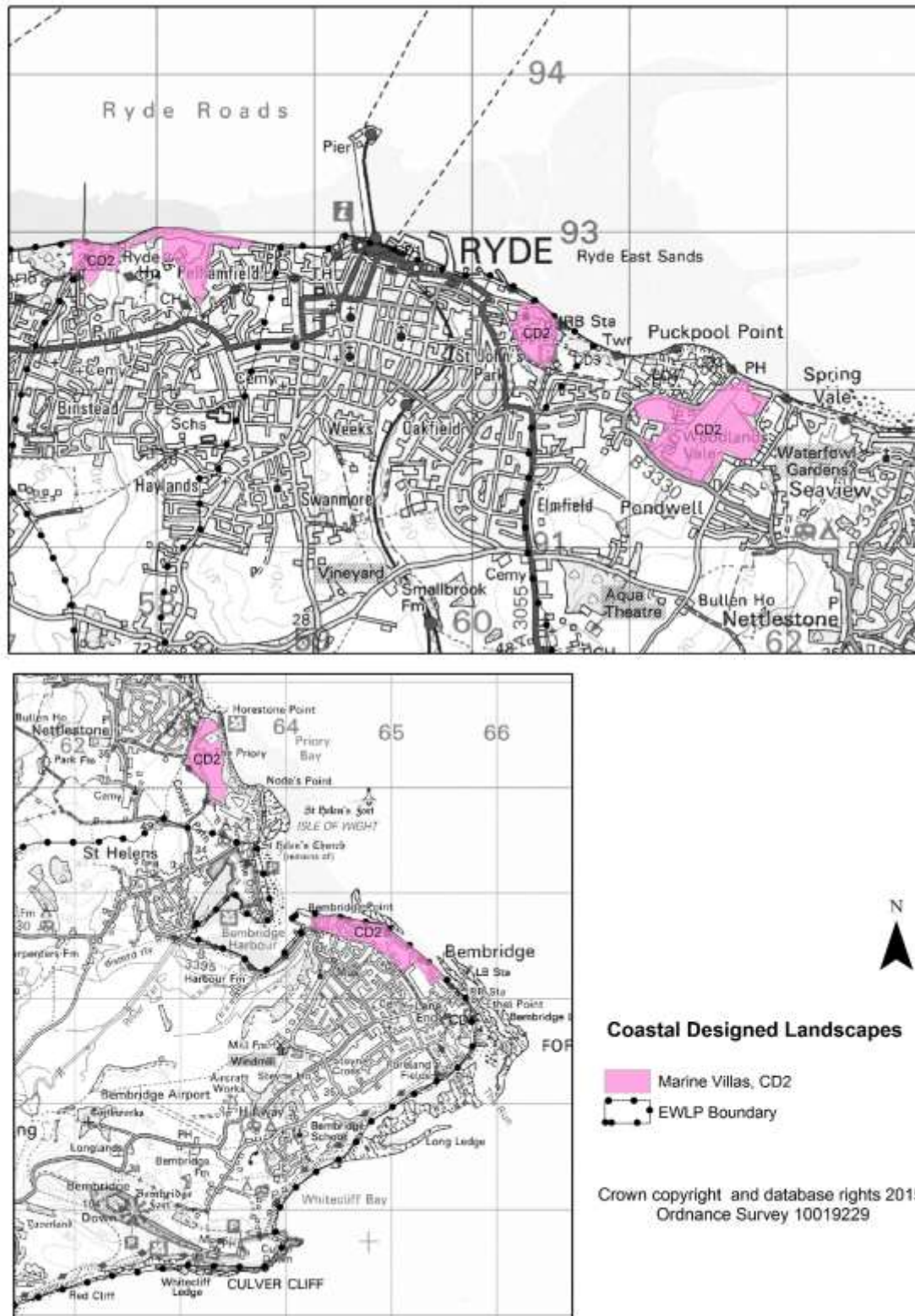
## **Landscape Strategy**

- Conserve and enhance this character area by ensuring that a consistent and sympathetic approach is taken to the design of buildings, open spaces, public realm, signage and other development, reflecting its evolution and respecting past influences.

## **Landscape Guidelines**

- Maintain the public realm including planted areas, open spaces, street furniture and paved areas
- Support proposed changes and upgrading of facilities where this has clearly considered and incorporated design elements to complement existing features
- Raise awareness of the historic origins and development of these valued public spaces

## CHARACTER AREA CD2: MARINE VILLAS



## Location and description

This character area includes clusters of marine villas and other cottages ornés along the northern coastline of the East Wight outside of its main settlement and urban areas. Marine villas and cottages ornés in the south of the East Wight area contribute greatly to the character of the Undercliff Landscape Character Type and are considered within that section.

During the Napoleonic Wars in the late C18th and early C19th it was not possible for the wealthy traveller to continue in the tradition of the 'Grand Tour' and attention turned from the touring of Europe to visiting areas of Great Britain. Alongside this was an increased interest in the 'picturesque' and the dramatic beauty of landscape. Areas such as Scotland, Wales the Lake District and the Isle of Wight all increasing in popularity as a result.

Marine villas and cottages ornés and their associated gardens and parklands were created by wealthy people wishing to be permanently or seasonally domiciled in the Isle of Wight. The perceived health giving qualities of the seaside including the new fashion of sea bathing also being a draw to the area. A number of Marine Villas were built as early as the late C18th with many more during the early, mid and late C19th. The choice of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert to base the Royal household at Osborne along with the railway access and improvements such as Ryde Pier making travel to and from the Island more comfortable were no doubt reasons for attracting more people to consider living on the Island's coast.

The underlying geology of these areas includes Bembridge Marls, Bembridge Limestones and Headon Beds and Osborne Beds overlain with drift River Terrace gravels and Alluvium deposits.

There are five distinct clusters within this character type:

Binstead and west of Ryde (Binstead House and Ryde House); East of Ryde (St Cecilia's); Woodlands Vale and Springvale (Woodlands Vale and Willow Bank); St Helens (The Priory) and finally Bembridge Coast (East Cliff Lodge, Marine Villa, Northwell Cottage, Pitt House, Thatch Cottage, Victoria House, Watch House, Swains House, Tyne Hall). All of the sites are in private ownership and only visible from adjacent public highways or from the beach.

Many of the buildings and gardens within this area are historically important. Listed buildings include: Northwells Grade II; Greylands Grade II; The Priory Grade II; Outbuildings at Priory Farm Grade II; Woodlands Vale Grade II; Japanense steps and Shinto arch at Woodlands Vale Grade II; Garden building south east of Woodlands Vale Grade II; Attached rose arches, balustrading etc at Woodlands Vale Grade II; The Keys Grade II; Keys Lodge Grade II; Church of the Holy Cross Grade II; Norman doorway at east end of churchyard wall Grade II.

Woodlands Vale has a large parkland and gardens and is of national significance being on the 'Register of Parks and Gardens of special historic interest in England'. The gardens at the Priory and St Cecilia's Abbey and grounds are on the local list for their parkland and gardens.

Small parts of this area fall within the Ryde St Johns and Bembridge Conservation Areas.

A small part of the area at Binstead falls within the Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The coastal location of this character area is of high value for nature conservation particularly the coastal slope and beaches. This includes the Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar and Special Protection Area of particular importance for bird species; part of the Whitecliff Bay to Bembridge Ledges Site of Special Scientific Interest (at the eastern end of the Bembridge cluster); Brading Haven and St Helens Ledges Site of Special Scientific Interest (at Priory Bay); small part of the Ryde Sands to Wootton Creek Site of Special Scientific Interest (small part at Binstead and west of Ryde). The Keys Woods, Ryde House Grounds and Priory Woods are Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation.

Land use is predominantly private gardens and parkland and the Woodlands Vale Estate has benefitted from Environmental Stewardship at entry level.

There have been small areas of additional woodland planting at The Priory.

There are no public rights of way or open access land within this character area but many of the clusters do have public footpaths, bridleways or roads close to their edges and some can be viewed from publicly accessible beaches below.

### **Key Characteristics**

- Private designed gardens and landscaped parkland dating from the C18th and C19th
- Record of the importance of the 'picturesque' movement and the establishment of the Isle of Wight as a destination of choice for summer or permanent marine residences
- Marine aspect taking advantage of views to the Solent and the mainland coastline
- Ornamental planting, structures, paths, and garden features some of which are of national importance reflected in their listed designation or inclusion on the national Register of Parks and Gardens of special historic interest in England.
- No public access



### **Past forces for change**

- Subdivision of larger designed gardens or landscapes with new infill development
- Coastal erosion
- Changing ownerships and tastes in garden design

### **Future forces for change**

- Coastal erosion
- Change of ownership
- Loss of garden and parkland features due to over maturity, re design or neglect

### **Condition and Character**

The overall condition of the features of this character area is judged to be **good** and the overall character is judged to be **strong**.

### **Sensitivities**

- Designed elements of garden and parkland settings including planting and structures
- Views to the sea and views from the coast to the designed landscapes
- Nature conservation value of the coastal zone including eroding cliffs on the edge of the area

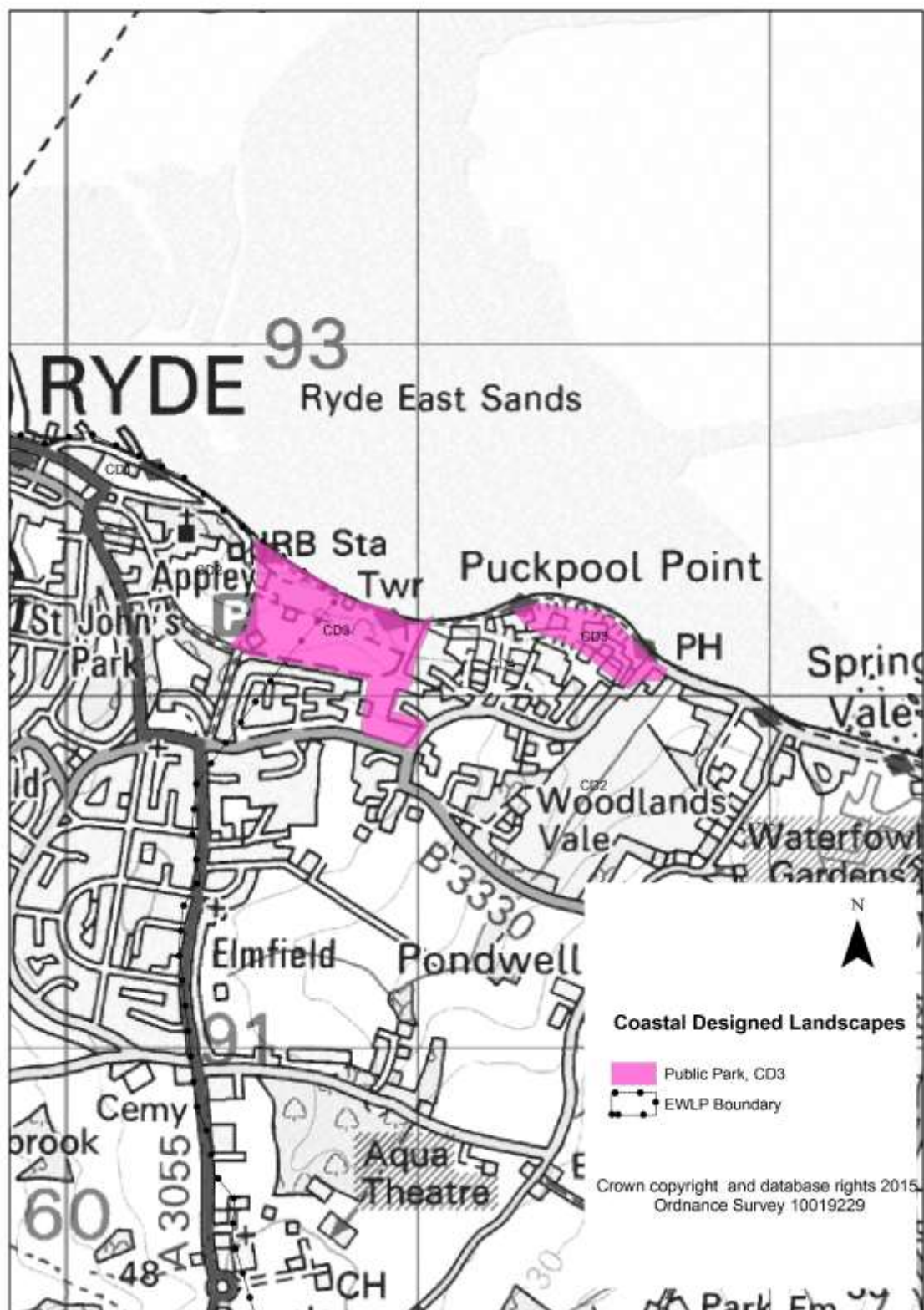
### **Landscape Strategy**

- Conserve the character and inherent qualities of this area. These include the original design concept of individual gardens and the parkland setting of Marine Villas and Cottage Ornés in this area; and the eroding coastline of high nature conservation value.

### **Landscape Guidelines**

- Work with private owners to record and conserve designed landscape features of interest
- Raise awareness of the historic appeal of the East Wight for the establishment of Marine Villas and the contribution these make to the overall character of the area

## CHARACTER AREA CD3: PUBLIC PARK



## Location and description

There are two areas of public park which have their origins as coastal designed landscapes having once been parkland for large residences taking advantage of their coastal location.

Both are located east of the town of Ryde. The first is Appley Park. This lies east of St Cecilia's Abbey and west of the former Harcourt Sands holiday park. Today this is a large public open space composed of a seawall promenade backed by a well wooded coastal strip and more open parkland setting with individual parkland trees.

Acquired by Ryde Borough Council after World War II, it is now owned and maintained by the Isle of Wight Council. Originally woodland and farmland of the nearby Troublefield Farm. It was used as part of the extensive grounds of St John's built to the west of the area in the C18th. Humphry Repton landscaped St John's Park for Edward Simeon after 1796, this may have included some aspects of the parkland in the present day Appley Park.

In the mid C19th the area of the present park and land to the south was acquired by George Young a Scottish Corn Merchant and formed his Apley Tower estate. The main building was designed by local architect Thomas Hellyer. This was purchased by Sir William Hutt in 1872. The Apley Tower estate was later known as Appley Towers and as Appley Hall. The principal building was demolished in the 1950s and is now occupied by a housing estate to the south of the park.

Today the area includes a perambulation path, the promenade/sea wall, the Grade II listed Appley Tower a castellated tower on the sea wall constructed in the C19th to view the Solent and yacht racing, beach huts, a children's play area, public conveniences, cafes and a large car park. Until fairly recently there was a pitch and putt golf course within the parkland setting.

The edge of Appley Park falls within the Ryde Conservation Area

The coastal woodland strip and some other woodland blocks in the south east of this area is ancient woodland having once been called St John's Wood and also Marine Wood.

Appley Park is also a Site of Interest for Nature Conservation.

The second area is Puckpool Park. This area was once part of Puckpool Farm which was purchased in 1822 by Mr Lewis William Wyatt who demolished the farm house and built Cliff Cottage in a Cottage Orn  style. This would have had landscaped ground taking advantage of fine sea views northwards to the Solent. In the mid C19th the estate was divided in two with the northern part becoming the site of Puckpool Battery a Palmerstonian fortification built to defend the coastline from potential invasion. This involved the excavation of a moat and the use of the spoil to

back the fortifications. This resulted in the obstruction of views from Cliff Cottage now called Puckpool House. After World War I the area was purchased by the St Helens Urban District Council opening as a public park in 1929. It was requisitioned again during World War II and returned to a public park in 1945.

Today the park consists of a cafe, miniature golf, tennis courts a children's playground and large open green spaces. Puckpool Battery is an imposing structure and in the past has been used to house an aquarium and aviary. Today access to the structure is limited to a number of walkways to the various gunnery positions. A path allows access through the wetland area in the moat and the open grassland on top of the fortifications offers glimpses of the Solent through the canopy of trees which have grown on the banks of the moat. A seawall walkway runs along the north of the site. Puckpool Mortar Battery is a scheduled monument. The Battery Hotel (now called the Pilot Boat Inn) is Grade II listed and located on the eastern edge of the area.

The very north of both areas falls within the edge of the Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar and Special Protection Area as an internationally important wetland. This area is also Ryde Sands and Wootton Creek Site of Special Scientific Interest.

### **Key Characteristics**

- Public parks on former private designed landscapes
- Historic designed landscape features still in evidence such as promenades, perambulation walks, Appley Tower and tree planting (particularly at Appley Park)
- Popular sites for visitors and for access to the sandy beaches
- The Puckpool Mortar Battery scheduled monument

### **Past forces for change**

- Building of the Puckpool Mortar Battery and loss of sea view from Puckpool House
- Creation of public parks from private landscaped parkland and a former coastal defence site
- Public investment in facilities and planting

### **Future forces for change**

- Reducing public sector resources and the impact on the upkeep of public open spaces and ornamental plantings
- Decrease or increase in visitor numbers and the impact on business growth or viability
- Changes to visitor expectations and impact on existing businesses and facilities

## **Condition and Character**

The overall condition of the features of this character area is judged to be **good** and the character of the area judged to be **strong**.

## **Sensitivities**

- Designed landscape features that remain, and reflect the former parkland or military setting of the areas
- Coastal views

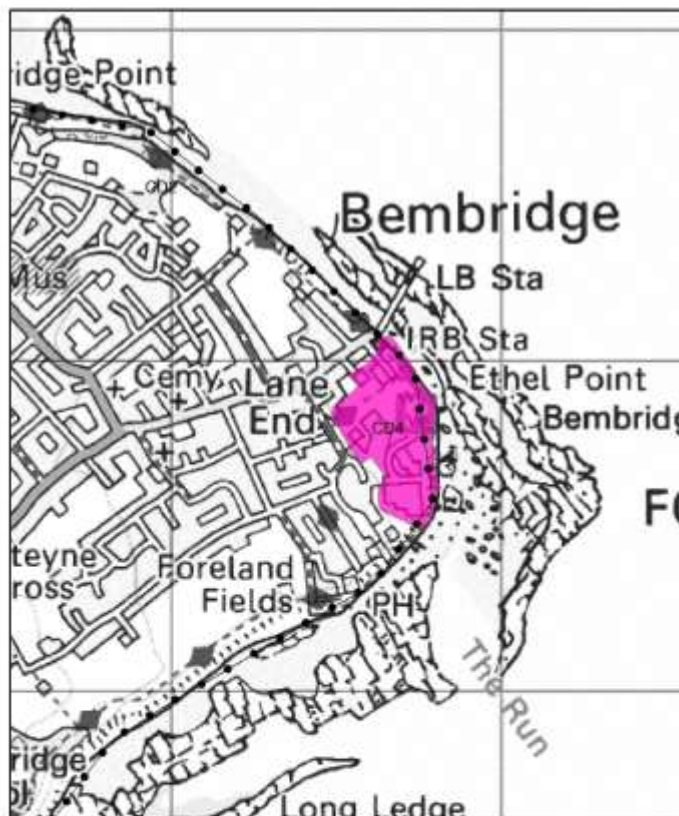
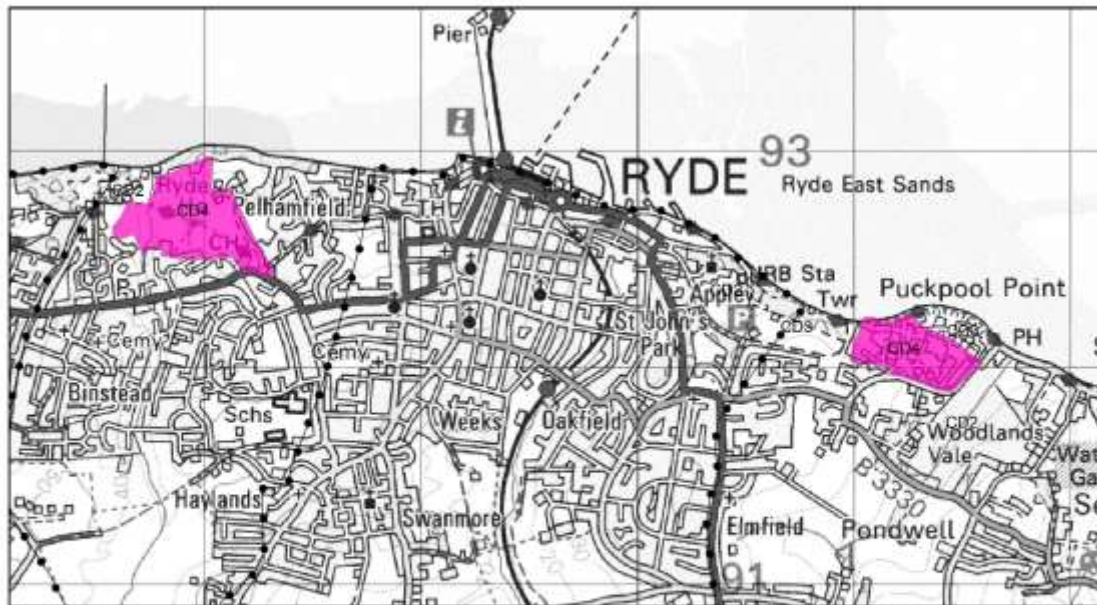
## **Landscape Strategy**

Conserve and where possible enhance the character and inherent qualities of this character area. These include the important historic military monument of Puckpool Mortar Battery; the former parkland of Appley Hall, Appley Tower, and coastal views.



## **Landscape Guidelines**

- Retain and where possible enhance historic designed landscape features in this area
- Protect views to and from the area to the beach - this could require some limited tree thinning at Puckpool to reconnect the historic battery with views to the Solent
- Conserve listed buildings and scheduled monuments in the area

## CHARACTER AREA CD4: REDEVELOPED SITES



### Coastal Designed Landscapes

-  EWLP Boundary
-  Redeveloped Sites, CD4

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Ordnance Survey 10019229



## Location and description

This character area is located in three clusters in the East Wight area.

The first is located at Ryde Golf Course west of the town of Ryde. This area was once parkland for the nearby Ryde House but was redeveloped as a golf course in the early C20th. Many elements of the original landscape can still be seen including parkland trees, re-profiling of land levels and construction of bunkers, fairways and greens have changed the area. Ladies Walk is a straight public right of way which passes through the area to the Church of the Holy Cross at Binstead and is part of the Isle of Wight Coastal Path.

The second area is the currently abandoned Harcourt Sands Holiday Park. This is located between Appley Park and Puckpool Park east of Ryde. Originally the area was part of two coastal designed landscapes St Clare and Puckpool House. The land at Puckpool which was not part of the boundary of Puckpool Park (see Public Parks) was first to be developed as a holiday park just before the beginning of World War II, St Clare followed post World War II and the two merged into one site in the 1960s after the loss of the main house of St Clare following a fire in the mid fifties and its demolition in the early 1960s. The combined Chalet St Clare and Puckpool Holiday Camp sites became Harcourt Sands and operated until 2006. Since that date it has lain empty and is now derelict. Puckpool Lodge and Puckpool House are both still standing and are Grade II listed. St Clare was visited on a number of occasions by Queen Victoria and her daughter Princess Alice and her new husband Louie Duke of Hesse spent their honeymoon at St Clare in 1862 staying in the lodge (Puckpool Lodge). The site is likely to be re-developed in the near future.

The third area is located at Bembridge and is the site of the Bembridge Coast Hotel near Forelands. A property on this site belonged to the Lord in Waiting of George V and often played host to visits from Queen Mary and Princess Beatrice and the late Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother may also have stayed there during Cowes Week on at least one occasion. The property and land was used by the Admiralty in World War II and became a 'Chalet Hotel' after the war. It is now part of the Warners Group and is a popular adults only hotel.

The northern edge of the Harcourt Sands site falls within the Solent and Southampton Waters Ramsar and Special Area of Conservation due to its wetland habitat its importance for bird species. This same area also lies within the Ryde Sands and Wootton Creek Site of Special Scientific Interest. Ryde House Grounds is a Site of Interest for Nature Conservation and Ryde House Copse is an ancient woodland.

## Key Characteristics

- Former designed landscapes which retain elements of their earlier origins but which have changed their use
- Coastal aspect taking advantage of views of the Solent or English Channel

## Past forces for change

- Change from a coastal designed landscape (parkland or gardens) to alternate uses (hotel, holiday park, golf course)
- Closure of business and dereliction of built structures on the site in the case of Harcourt Sands, currently an eyesore in the local area
- Lack of maintenance and repair of Puckpool Lodge (Grade II listed) which is suffering as a result
- Coastal erosion at Bembridge Coast
- Landscaping for golf course development at Ryde Golf Course

## Future forces for change

- Coastal erosion
- Re-development of the Harcourt Sands site which falls within the wider Ryde Area Action Plan area of the Island Plan

## Condition and Character

The overall condition of the features of this character area is judged to be **moderate** and the overall character of the area is judged to be **moderate**. NB this is heavily influenced by the current derelict poor condition of Harcourt Sands and its resultant weak character which has reduced the rating of the other two sites which on their own would score a condition of **good** and character of **strong**.

## Sensitivities

- Coastal views
- Remaining features relating to historic designed landscape influences
- Listed buildings

## Landscape Strategy

- Conserve, enhance and where possible restore or recreate designed landscape features in this character area. This includes remaining paths, parkland trees, garden structures and coastal vistas.

## **Landscape Guidelines**

- Conserve remaining designed landscape elements
- Identify opportunities to restore or recreate designed features in any proposals for redevelopment or improvements in the area
- Protect the area's coastal views

## LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE: COASTAL FARMLAND



View towards Yaverland manor and Brading Down.



Red Cliff at Yaverland.

This Landscape Character Type is located in just one distinct part of the East Wight area and as such has only one corresponding character area.

A rolling landscape of arable cultivation in the west and grazed grassland areas in the east with an actively eroding coastal zone at Redcliff rich in its ecology, historic environment, geological and paleontological interest.

Small areas of ancient woodland are found in the west of the area close to the valley floor at Marshcombe Copse.

The historic church manor complex of Yaverland falls within this area with Yaverland Manor and the Church of St John the Baptist being Grade I listed. Yaverland was also a medieval parish in its own right.

### **Key Characteristics**

- A largely pastoral landscape with some areas of woodland and arable cultivation underlain by a diverse geology of clay and sandstones
- Peaceful and rural area with open and panoramic views to Sandown Bay and the English Channel
- A rising landform from the valley floor and coast up towards the base of the chalk downs
- Important historic environment with buildings of particular note
- A number of public rights of way pass through the area including the coastal path, with some areas near the coast and at the base of the downs also being open countryside
- Actively eroding coastline of nature conservation, historic environment, geological and paleontological interest and value

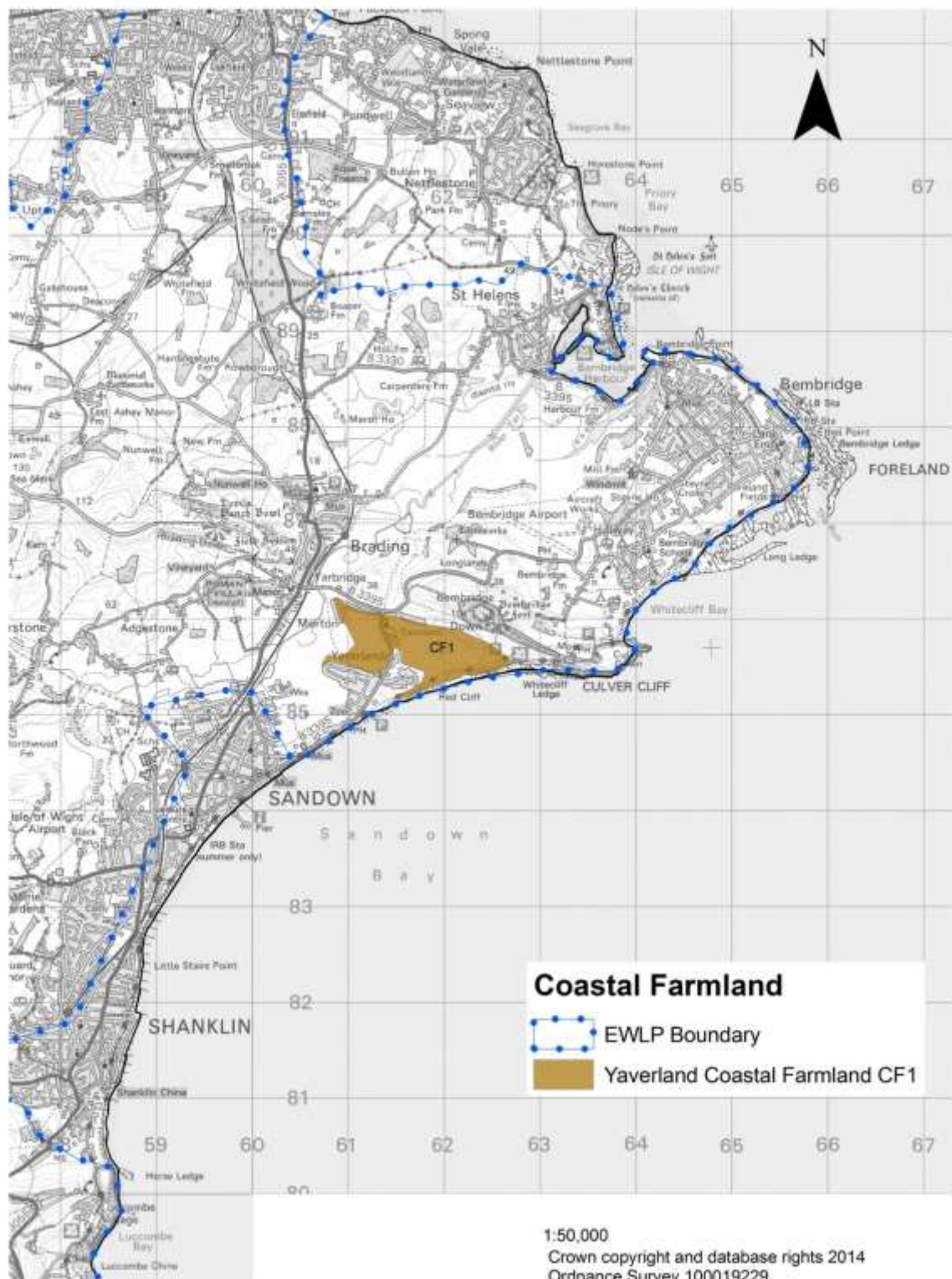


Figure 30: Coastal Farmland Landscape Character Type and Area





## CHARACTER AREA CF1: YAVERLAND COASTAL FARMLAND



## Location and description

This Landscape Character Area is located close to the settlement of Yaverland which is directly east of the character area, bounded by chalk downland to the north, the sea to the south, valley floor to the west and Sandown Bay Holiday Centre to the southwest. It lies within the civil parish of Sandown. Elevation ranges from sea level to 50m Above Ordnance Datum with a gradual incline from south west to north east.

Underlying geology consists of the fossil rich Wealden Group, Wealden Clay, Atherfield Clay, Ferruginous Sands and a narrow band of Sandrock, Carstone and Gault. Some areas of drift alluvium deposits are located close to the valley floor in the east of the area. The soft eroding cliffs around Red Cliff are a key characteristic of the area.

Yaverland was a medieval parish and is recorded in the Domesday Survey. Yaverland Manor and the Church of St John the Baptist are both Grade I listed buildings. Two barns at Yaverland Manor are Grade II listed.

The Historic Landscape Characterisation tells us that much of this area has seen change in the C19th and C20th with the amalgamation of fields into larger units, re-organisation of field patterns and large areas of land which were enclosed from open field and open field furlong in the post medieval period. There are also areas of unimproved land on the steeper slopes. The area falls within the Brading and Bembridge Isle Historic Landscape Character Area.

Nearly all of the area lies within the Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Within a fairly small area there is a mix of arable cultivation on the more open flatter area in the west and extensive grazing pastures to the east closer to the downland and coast. Large parts of the area are now within the ownership and management of conservation charities.

The area has benefits from the Countryside Stewardship and Environmental Stewardship schemes focussing on the regeneration of grassland and semi-natural vegetation; creation of permanent grass margins; over wintered stubble followed by spring fallow and open access payments. Around 30% of the area is receiving entry and higher level stewardship payments.

The coastal part of the area lies within the South Wight Maritime Special Area of Conservation of importance for its vegetated maritime cliffs and exposed coastal geology. It also falls within the Bembridge Down Site of Special Scientific Interest. Bembridge Down and Marshcombe Copse are two Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation. Parts of the area fall within the Eastern Yar Valley and Eastern Central Ridge Biodiversity Opportunity Areas.

Redcliff and Bembridge Down are Open Access land and there are a number of linear public rights of way which pass through this area including part of the Isle of Wight Coastal Path.

### **Key Characteristics**

- A largely pastoral landscape with some areas of woodland and arable cultivation underlain by a diverse geology of clay and sandstones
- Peaceful and rural area with open and panoramic views to Sandown Bay and the English Channel
- A rising landform from the valley floor and coast up towards the base of the chalk downs
- Important historic environment with buildings of particular note
- A number of public rights of way pass through the area including the coastal path, with some areas near the coast and at the base of the downs also being open countryside
- Actively eroding coastline of nature conservation, historic environment, geological and paleontological interest and value

### **Past forces for change**

- Coastal erosion
- Intensification of agricultural production and practices particularly in the latter part of the C20th.
- Changed land ownership
- Investment in conservation and enhancement of the landscape, natural and historic environment through Environmental Stewardship

### **Future forces for change**

- Climate change impacts
- Benefits from continued investment through Environmental Stewardship schemes
- Further coastal erosion

### **Condition and Character**

The overall condition of the features of this character area is judged to be **good** and the character is judged to be **strong**.

### **Sensitivities**

- Geological, environmental, paleontological and historic environmental importance of the actively eroding coastline
- Tranquillity of this rural area
- Habitats conserved or enhanced through investment from Environmental Stewardship.

- Historic listed buildings

### **Landscape Strategy**

- Conserve and where possible enhance the character and inherent qualities of this character area. These include grassland and semi-natural habitats including those formed as a result of the actively eroding coastline, the important historic buildings in the area, ancient woodland and the wetland habitats in the west of the area.

### **Landscape Guidelines**

- Conserve and where possible enhance the nature conservation interest of the grasslands, and arable margins in the area
- Identify opportunities for wetland habitat enhancement in the west of the area
- Conserve the important historic buildings in the area
- Retain the open aspect, tranquillity and views within the area

## LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE: EAST WIGHT WOODLAND



Hazel coppice in Borthwood.



View towards Firestone Copse.





Coastline at Priory Woods.

View of woodlands north of the central chalk downland taken from Ashey Down.



Bluebells in Ancient Woodland.

Woodland cover is a feature of many parts of the East Wight landscape; from hanger woodlands on the steep side of downland, secondary woodland cover in the Undercliff, small copses within pasture land and strips of woodland along watercourses in the valley floor. All of these contribute to the character of these areas. However in some parts of the East Wight where woodland cover is more dominant and a major influence on the landscape, it justifies classification as a landscape character type in its own right.

Coastal woodland is found in areas along the northern coastline of the East Wight, outside of settlement areas and resort towns and villages. These woodlands are reflective of the historic character of the majority of the northern coastline of the East Wight prior to this development taking place. Unsurprisingly, many of the copses in this area are ancient woodlands having had woodland cover since at least the year 1600, and as a result are of high nature conservation and historic value.

Inland on the heavier clay soils south of the north coast and north of the central chalk ridge where cultivation of the land is more difficult, woodland is a major feature of the landscape. Often appearing almost as a large single block of woodland cover in views from the surrounding countryside, these areas are actually composed of groups of smaller copses, plantation woodland, glades and grassland areas.

South of the central chalk on the more free draining sandstones the landscape is more open, but in some parts woodland is a more dominant landscape feature. These woodland areas vary and include hanger woodlands, recently planted woodlands on former arable fields, and more extensive wood pasture close to watercourses.

### **Key Characteristics**

- Extensive woodland cover often appearing as large blocks but usually composed of a series of copses, glades, meadows and in some areas watercourses
- Ancient woodlands of high nature conservation and historic value
- Many are under the influence and management of conservation charities
- Public rights of way and more informal access is found in many of the these woodland areas giving them significant amenity and leisure use value
- Tranquil areas
- Interaction between ancient woodland sites and adjacent coastline or watercourses of particular value

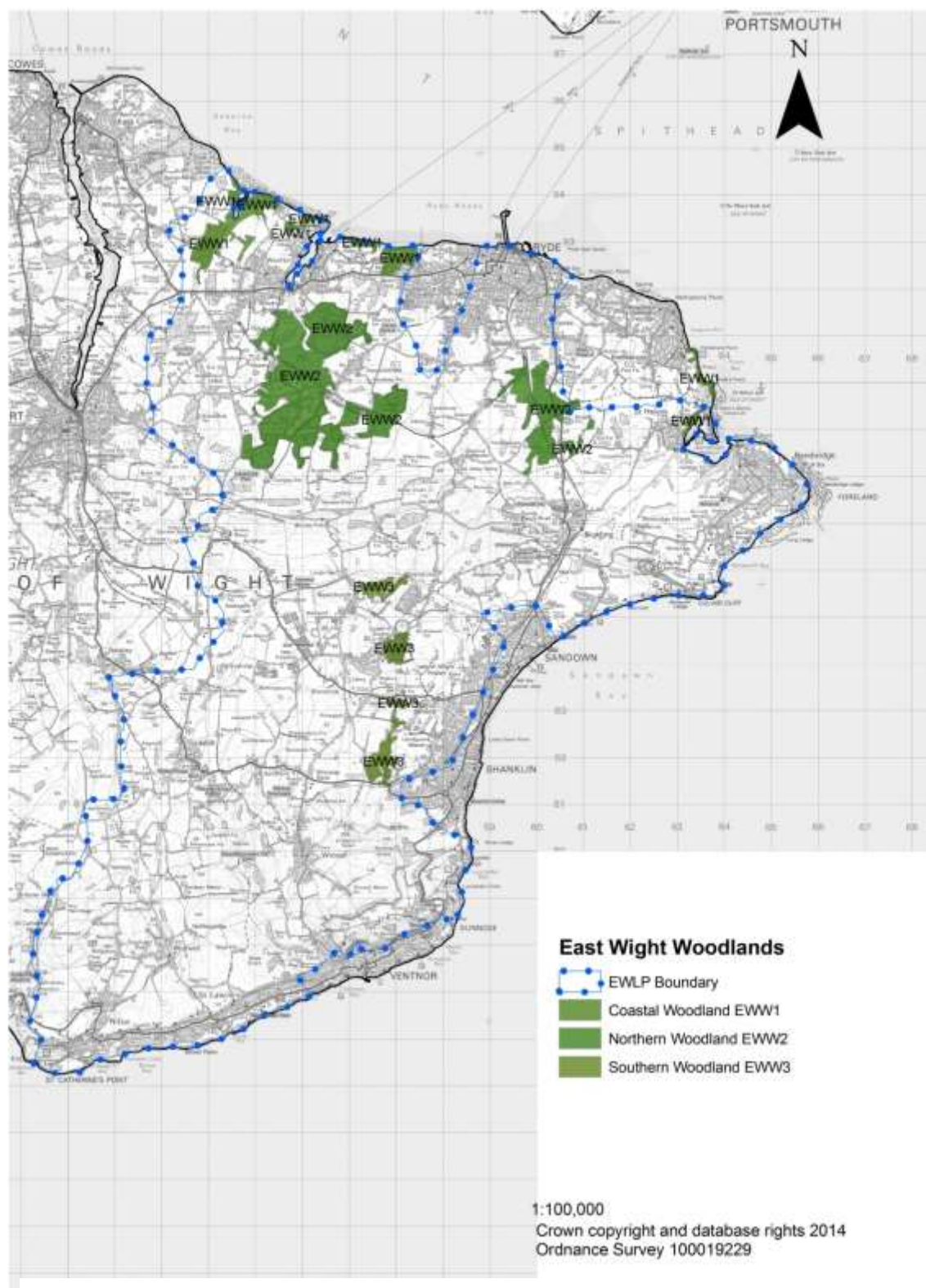
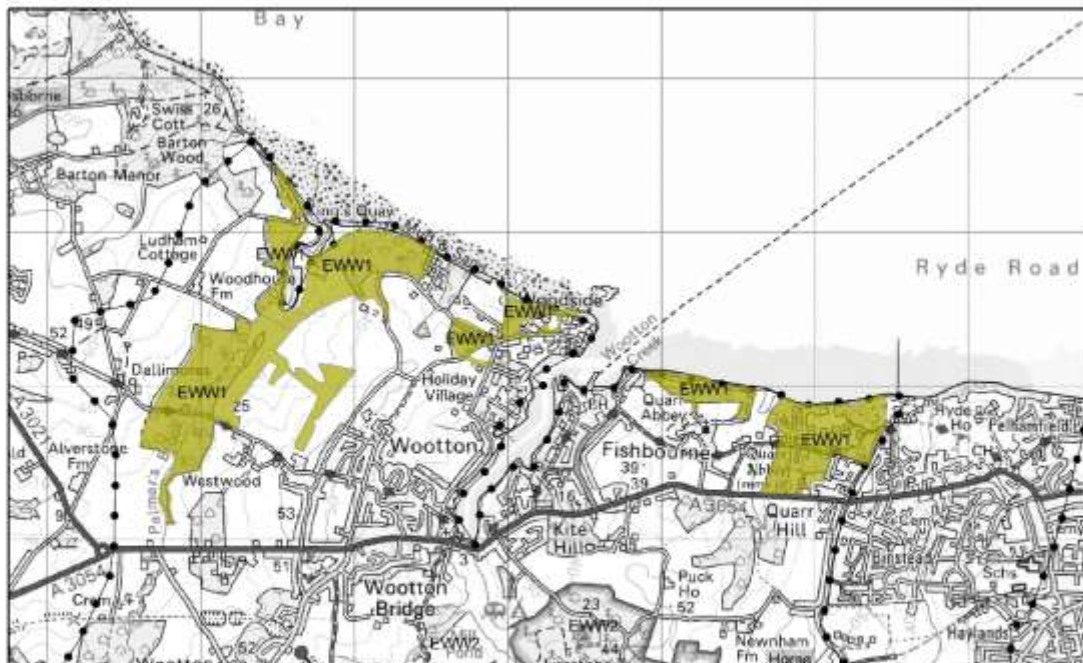


Figure 31: East Wight Woodland Landscape Character Areas



## CHARACTER AREA EWW1:COASTAL WOODLAND



## Location and description

This character area is located along the northern coastline of the East Wight. These woodlands are representative of the original landscape character of much of the northern coastline of the East Wight prior to its development from the C18th through the C19th and C20th. A large part of the area is located around and south of King's Quay in the north west of the East Wight; at Lower Woodside north of Wootton Bridge; at Quarr between Fishbourne and Binstead; at Priory Bay and the Common near St Helens Duver.

Underlying geology consists of Bembridge Marls, Bembridge Limestones, Headon and Osborne Beds and Hamstead Beds overlain with Tidal Flat, Alluvium, Blown Sand, River Terrace and Beach and Tidal Flat drift deposits. Elevation ranges between sea level and 40 metres above Ordnance Datum.

These coastal woodlands are often heavily influenced by the impact of coastal erosion and tidal conditions and where slightly inland by the adjacent wetland areas.

Around 60% of the area lies within the Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (the north west close to King's Quay).

The area is largely unsettled with the exception of a number of properties in the woodland at Quarr and the Castle at St Helen's. There is only one listed building in the area, Brocks Copse Lodge Grade II. The gardens at the Castle in St Helen's are on the Local List. A small part of the St Helens Conservation Area falls within this character area. The western clusters fall within the Northern Lowlands Historic Landscape Character Area with the rest of the area falling within the Brading Haven and Bembridge Isle Historic Landscape Character Area.

Many of the copses in the area are ancient woodlands including: Woodhouse Copse, Timber Copse, Greatmead Copse, Brocks Copse, Brick Kiln Copse, Cliff Copse, Curlews Copse, Aldeen's Copse, Chapel Corner Copse, Woodside Copse, Fishbourne Copse, Quarr Wood, Priory Woods, The Keys Wood.

A number of these are also Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation including: Woodside Copse; Wallishill Copse; Aldeen's Copse, Quarr Wood, Priory Woods, Woodhouse Copse, Brocks Copse and The Key's Wood.

Significant new planting of woodland has taken place close to King's Quay and Palmer's Farm in the north west of the area.

The coastline of the area falls within the Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar site and Solent Maritime Special Area of Conservation (in the King's Quay area).

There are also a number of Sites of Special Scientific Interest across the area including: Priory Woods, King's Quay Shore, Brading Marshes and St Helens Ledges (at St Helens) and Ryde Sands and Wootton Creek.

The north coastal woodlands are partly within the North Eastern Woods Biodiversity Opportunity Area and the woodland at St Helens is partly within the Eastern Yar Valley Biodiversity Opportunity Area.

Although the area is primarily wooded there are some fields close to King's Quay and these are benefitting from Environmental Stewardship within the higher level scheme.

Public access in the these areas is limited to a number of linear public rights of way but in general is minimal.

### **Key Characteristics**

- Wooded coastal area with tree growth to shore level and subject to the impact of tidal conditions and coastal erosion
- High nature conservation value reflected by the wealth of designations for woodland and wetland habitats
- Largely unsettled with the exception of a number of private properties within Quarr Woods and at St Helens
- Many ancient woodlands throughout the area

### **Past forces for change**

- Coastal erosion
- Loss of tree cover in the ground of some properties (particularly in the Quarr Woods area)
- Additional woodland planting

### **Future forces for change**

- Coastal erosion
- Climate change and sea level rise
- Further pressure on woodland in domestic gardens and in relation to any proposals for development
- Further woodland planting

### **Condition and Character**

The overall condition of the features of this character area is judged to be **good** and the character of the area is judged to be **strong**.

### **Sensitivities**

- The interface between the coast and woodland areas
- Ancient woodland
- Wet woodland areas
- Changing sea levels



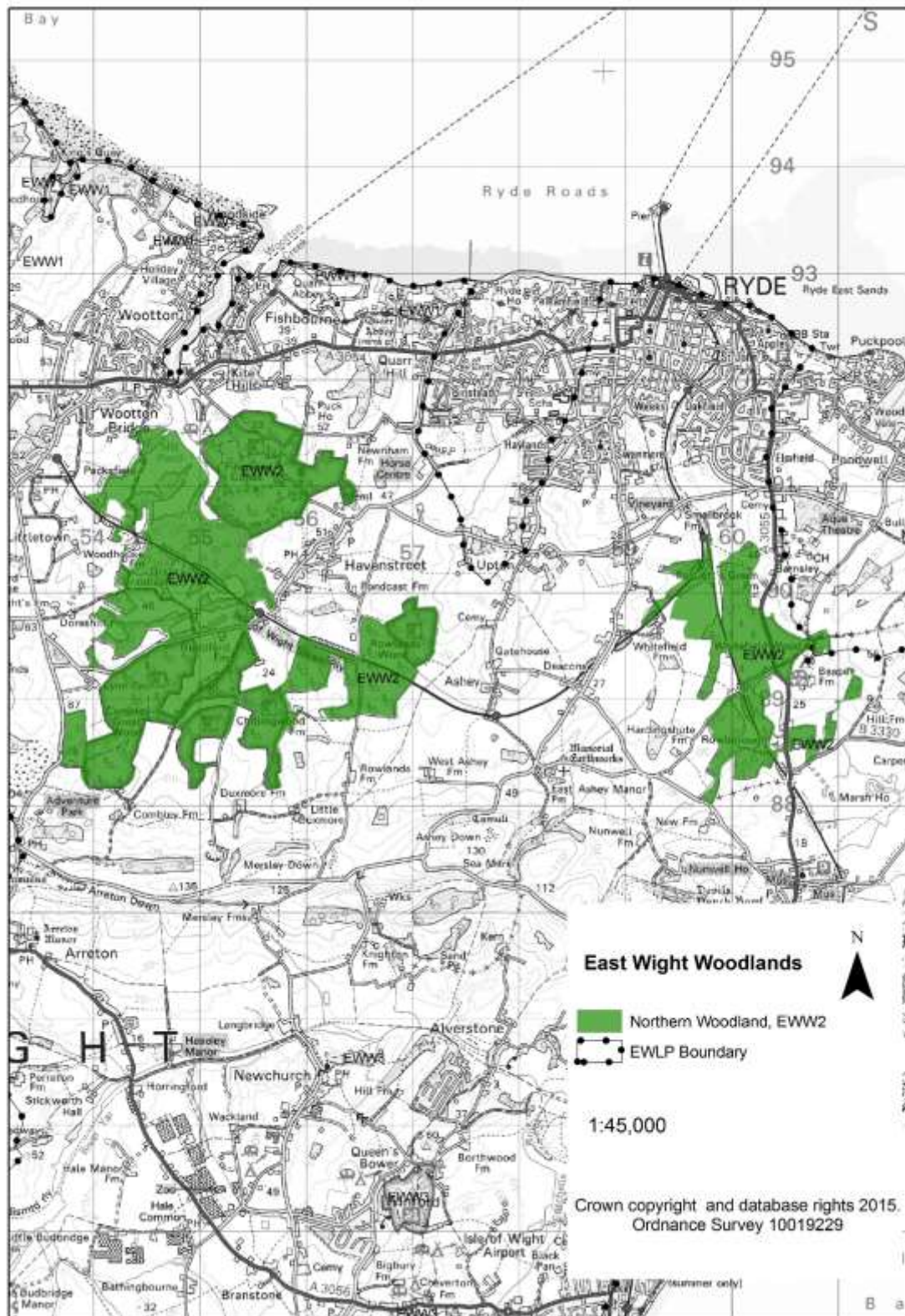
## **Landscape Strategy**

Conserve the coastal woodland in this area recognising its historic importance, its contribution to the character of the East Wight landscape and its value for nature conservation.

## **Landscape Guidelines**

- Conserve ancient woodlands
- Allow the continuation of natural coastal erosion processes
- Identify opportunities to extend woodland planting in adjacent areas that will benefit wildlife by creating corridors between existing woodlands ensuring no damage to the historic environment in the process

## CHARACTER AREA EWW2: NORTHERN WOODLAND



## Location and description

Located inland from the northern coast there are two areas of the East Wight which are heavily wooded consisting of a number of smaller copses grouped around pastoral fields. In the wider landscape these areas appear almost as entire woodland cover. An extensive area it falls within a number of civil parishes including; Wootton Bridge; Brading; Havenstreet & Ashey and Fishbourne.

The first of these is a large area south of the village of Wootton Bridge extending to Briddlesford Road in the west north and south of the village of Havenstreet and extending to the west of Ashey in the east. This area consists of a number of smaller copses most of which are ancient woodlands including: Hurst Copse; Six Acre Copse; Vicarage Copse; Sandpit Copse; Long Rew; Chillingwood Copse; Burnt Piece; Rowlands Wood; Kemphill Moor Copse; Firestone Copse; Dunnage Copse; Sheepwash Rew; Lower Sheepwash Copse; Rags Copse; Hill Copse; Combley Great Wood; Briddlesford Copses; Hoglease Copse; Guidlfordheath Copse; Walkershill Copse and Ramcroft Copse. There is a mix of broadleaved species and conifer species including a number of plantation forests on ancient woodland sites (PAWS) such as the Forestry Commission sites at Firestone and Combley Great Wood. The majority of this area lies within the Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The second area is located further east south of the town of Ryde and north of the town of Brading. It stretches either side of the A3055 and Island Line railway line and includes the large woodlands of both broadleaved and conifer species with some plantation areas. A number of pasture fields including a cricket ground are also within this area. The majority of the area is ancient woodland including: Beaper Copse; Prestwood Butt; Angels Copse; Lower Rowborough Copse; Swanpond Copse; Roke Mead Copse; Peakyclose Copse; Whitefield Woods East; Whitefield Woods West; Little Rowborough Copse.

Underlying geology is heavy clay including Bembridge Marls and Hamstead Beds overlain in some areas with Alluvium and River Terrace drift deposits. Elevation ranges from 10 metres to 80 metres above Ordnance Datum.

Great Briddlesford Farmhouse is Grade II listed and is the only listed building in the area. The Historic Landscape Characterisation reinforces the well wooded character of the area indicating some areas of present day pasture as having been assarted out of woodland in the past and other fields have been enclosed from meadows. The area falls within the Northern Lowlands Historic Landscape Character Area.

Nearly 18 hectares of new woodland have been planted across the area through grant schemes since the 1990s. Most of this has been on the edge of existing woodland.

Briddlesford Copses are internationally important woodlands designated as a Special Area of Conservation (this includes a number of named copses in the area grouped under the name Briddlesford Copses). This is due to its varied, structurally diverse and species rich cluster of ancient broadleaved woodland on the Isle of Wight. The presence of the upper reaches of Wootton Creek and the Blackbridge Brook also introduce a wetland habitat element into the woodland. It supports an important breeding population of the rare Bechstein's Bat as well as other important animal and plant species such as the Red Squirrel, Dormouse, woodland butterflies, wood-cricket and narrow-leaved lungwort. It is also nationally designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest for the same interest. A large part of this area is owned and managed by the Peoples Trust for Endangered Species.

Around 55% of the character area is designated as Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation primarily for its ancient woodland interest.

The area falls within the Northeastern Woods Biodiversity Opportunity Area, highlighting its potential for woodland management for mammals and butterflies, hedgerow management and high tide roosts for waterbirds.

Around 40% of the area benefits from Environmental Stewardship at entry level and entry/higher level.

Public access includes a number of public rights of way which pass through the woodland areas and more extensive access on woodland rides and trails in the Forestry Commission sites at Firestone and Combley Great Wood.

### **Key Characteristics**

- Woodland cover appearing as dominant blocks in the landscape north of the central chalk ridge
- Often composed of a number of individual woodlands with glades and small enclosed meadows between copses mixed with more continuous woodland cover including areas of dense plantation forestry
- Network of hedgerows, hedgerow trees enclosing small fields and acting as wildlife corridors
- High nature conservation value, particularly in relation to the cluster of woodlands called Briddlesford Copses with its complex woodland structure, species richness and wetland areas close to Wootton Creek and Blackbridge Brook

### **Past forces for change**

- Clearance of broadleaved woodland species and planting of conifer species
- New planting of woodland in the last twenty years to link existing woodland areas and extending woodland cover
- Conservation management funded through the Environmental Stewardship scheme
- Ownership of woodland areas by bodies committed to conservation objectives

### **Future forces for change**

- Continued investment in conservation by owners and through funding from the Environmental Stewardship scheme
- Management of plantations including felling and replanting

### **Condition and Character**

The overall condition of the features of this character area is judged to be **good** and the overall character is judged to be **strong**.

### **Sensitivities**

- Dominant appearance in the landscape
- Ancient woodland and its associated nature conservation and historic environment importance
- Woodland access through the public rights of way network and on rides and trails in Forestry Commission sites

### **Landscape Strategy**

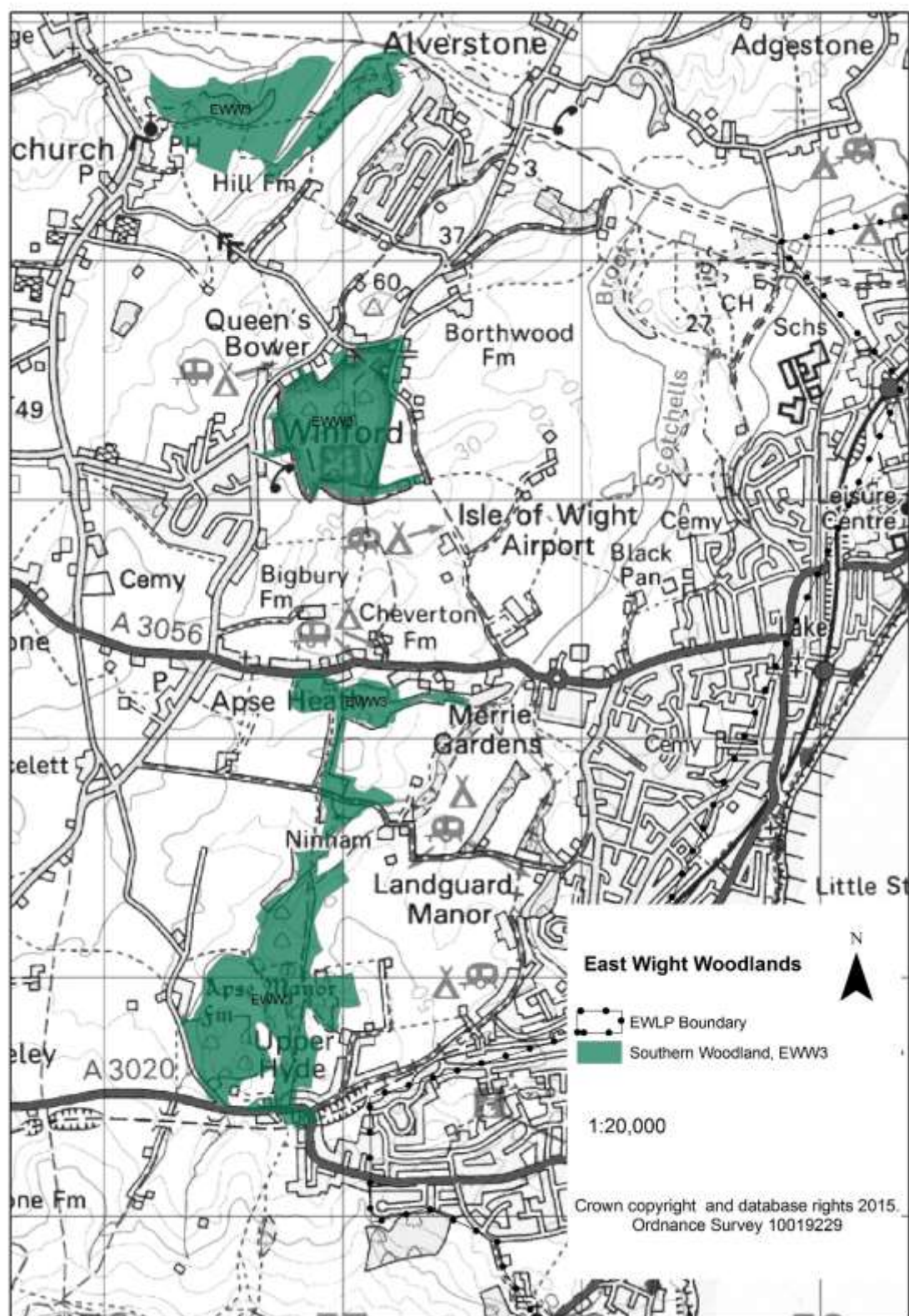
- Conserve and where possible enhance the character and inherent qualities of this character area. These include the ancient woodland areas, hedgerows, meadows, wetlands and opportunities for quiet enjoyment.

### **Landscape Guidelines**

- Conserve the woodland interest of the area particularly the ancient woodlands
- Encourage the strengthening of broadleaved woodland through new planting on areas previously assarted out of woodland
- Actively manage hedgerows to maximise their nature conservation value and use as wildlife corridors



## CHARACTER AREA EWW3: SOUTHERN WOODLAND





## Location and description

This character area is located south of the central chalk ridge and north of the southern chalk downland inland from Sandown Bay, falling within the civil parishes of Shanklin and Newchurch.

Underlying geology is predominantly Ferruginous Sands with some small areas of Sandrock Formation with drift deposits of River Terrace gravels and a small area of Peat (in America Wood) making these woodlands more free draining than those on the clays north of the central chalk. In some areas these woods are close to the valley floor and may be wetter in character due to the influence of adjacent water courses. Elevation ranges from 10 metres to 80 metres above Ordnance Datum.

There are three distinct blocks of Southern Woodland.

The first is located north east of the village of Newchurch at Martin's Wood, Lynch Copse and Hill Copse. Lynch and Hill Copse are ancient woodlands both located on steep slopes. Martin's Wood is an extensive area of recent woodland planting on former intensive arable cultivated fields, planted less than 20 years ago. It has established quickly and includes a number of paths, open spaces and actively managed nature conservation areas (including the Bee Fields managed for ground nesting bee species with 96 species having been recorded there so far). It is a popular open space for the local community and with dog walkers.

The next area is Borthwood Copse. An ancient woodland with a mix of broadleaved species and including small areas of sweet chestnut plantation and groups of conifers. Managed in part as coppiced woodland with glades the area is popular with walkers particularly in the spring when it is carpeted with bluebells. The whole woodland is accessible being in National Trust ownership and being crossed by a number of public rights of way and many informal paths.

The third area stretches from Apse Heath in the north to the A3056 west of Shanklin in the south. It includes the Barton, Ninham and Scotchell's Withybeds, America Wood and Apse Castle Wood. A mix of broadleaved and conifer species and areas of open space (much of this area is owned by the Woodlands Trust).

The Historic Landscape Characterisation tells us that the majority of this area is woodland consisting of plantation, ancient woodland, osiers, secondary woodland. Fields in the south of the area near to Apse Castle have been formed from the enclosure of pasture or meadow, or assarted from woodland. The whole area falls within the medieval parishes of Newchurch and Brading and within Arreton Valley, Newchurch Environs and Sandown Bay Historic Landscape Character Areas.

About 30% of the area at Lynch Copse, Hill Copse and Borthwood falls within the Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Around 60% of the character area is ancient woodland including: Borthwood; America Wood; Lynch Copse and Hill Copse.

Significant areas of new woodland planting have taken place at Martin's Wood, and on the edge of America Wood close to Upper Hyde.

America Wood is a Site of Special Scientific Interest as the best example of ancient wood-pasture on the Isle of Wight. The grassland areas are located close to Scotchells Brook which flows through the woodland. Hill Copse falls within the Alverstone Marshes Site of Special Scientific Interest due to the wetland interest of the valley floor woodland.

There are a number of Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation in the area including: Lynch Copse; Borthwood Copse; Apse Castle Wood and Ninham and Barton Withybeds.

The valley areas at the base of Lynch Copse and alongside the stream in America Wood lie within the Eastern Yar Valley Biodiversity Opportunity Area indicating potential for wetland habitats in the those areas.

The Martin's Wood area has benefitted from funding through the Environmental Stewardship scheme.

There are public rights of way throughout the area allowing access through these woodlands and also many informal paths allow further opportunities to explore at some sites.

### **Key Characteristics**

- Wooded areas on free draining sandstone geology with some wetland close to watercourses
- High nature conservation value of some areas of woodland
- Largely unsettled
- Some grassland areas associated with America Wood and an important part of its nature conservation interest as wood-pasture

### **Past forces for change**

- Large area of new planting of woodland at Martin's Wood near Newchurch on former arable land
- Charitable organisation ownership of some areas (America Wood - Woodland Trust, Martin's Wood - Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, Borthwood - National Trust)

### **Future forces for change**

- Continued growth of Martin's Wood and development of mature woodland structure
- Visitor pressure on key routes and popular sites

### **Condition and Character**

The overall condition of the features of this character area are judged to be **good** and the overall character is judged to be **strong**.

### **Sensitivities**

- Ancient woodland
- Nature conservation value of woodland and wetland areas

### **Landscape Strategy**

- Conserve the woodland character of this area and in particular the historic and nature conservation value of ancient woodland areas and grassland sites in woodland glades.

### **Landscape Guidelines**

- Conserve and where possible enhance the nature conservation importance of woodland sites, in particular in ancient woodlands
- Identify opportunities to realise the potential of wetland and grassland areas within woodlands

## LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE: HARBOURS AND CREEKS



Bembridge Harbour viewed from St Helen's Duver.



Wootton Creek north of the bridge.



Wootton Creek south of the bridge..



St Helen's Duver.

This character type is located in three areas along the north coast of the East Wight. These rias were formed by historic flooding of river valleys due to sea level rise.

Contrasting between tranquil inlets flanked by ancient woodland and bustling colourful harbours with moorings, jetties and moving watercraft, these estuarine environments are very important nature conservation habitats being part of the international designated Special Areas of Conservation, Ramsar convention sites and Special Protection Areas. Parts are also recognised nationally as Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

Tidal cycles create further interest from inundation at high tide to exposure of mudflats, shingle banks and sand at low tide creating a dynamic environment with specialist species able to tolerate extremes of dry, wet, hot and cold conditions.

Wootton Creek and Bembridge Harbour are popular locations for marine based businesses and leisure activities including one of the Island's car ferry terminals. The Old Mill Pond south of Wootton Bridge and King's Quay are not as easily accessed, and are quieter and more secretive in character.

### **Key Characteristics**

- Tranquil areas contrasting with busy and popular harbours
- High nature conservation value
- Important historic environment and paleoenvironmental evidence (especially at Wootton Creek and King's Quay)
- Open aspect
- Adjacent landscapes are often important habitats such as ancient woodland



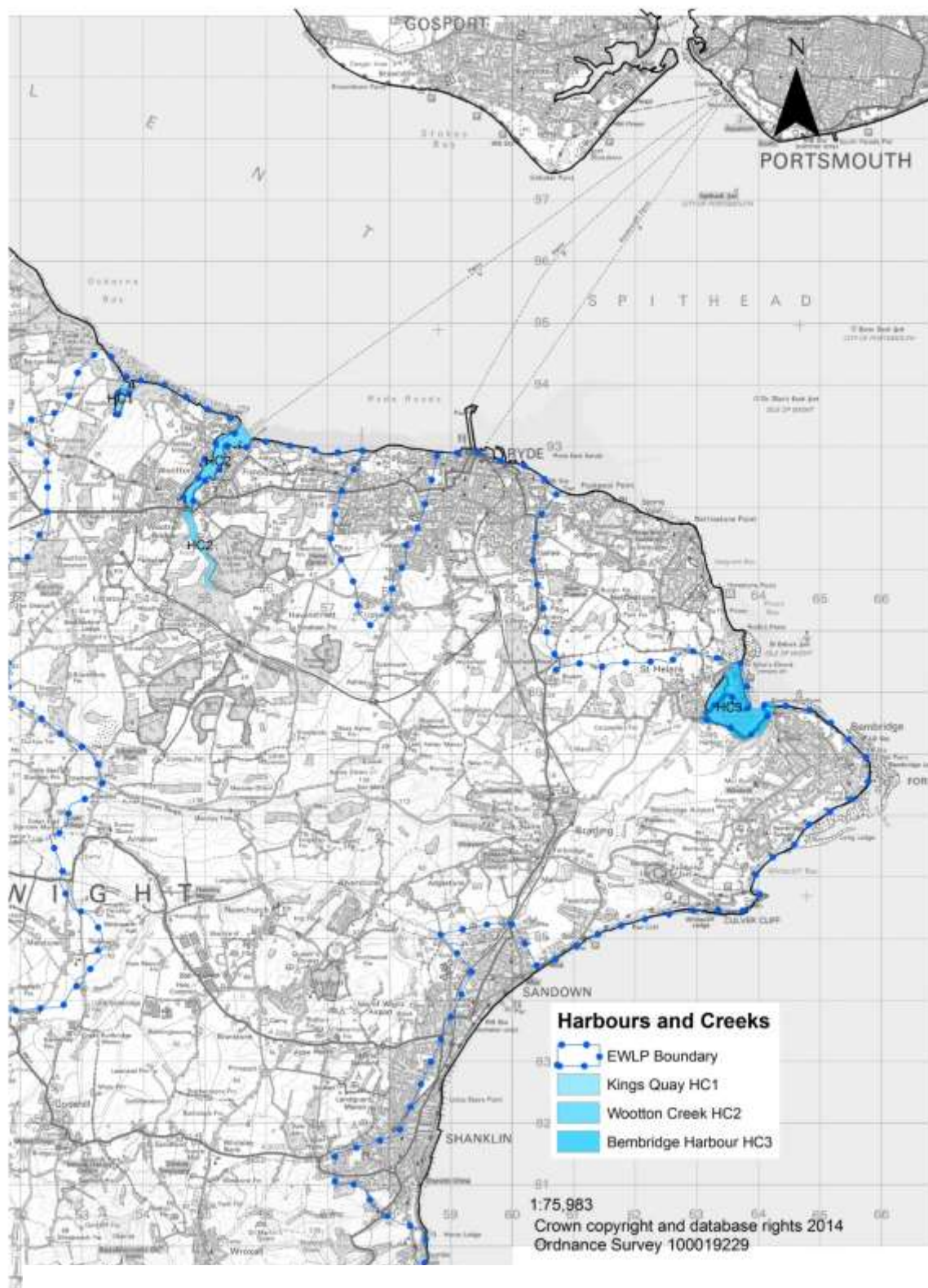
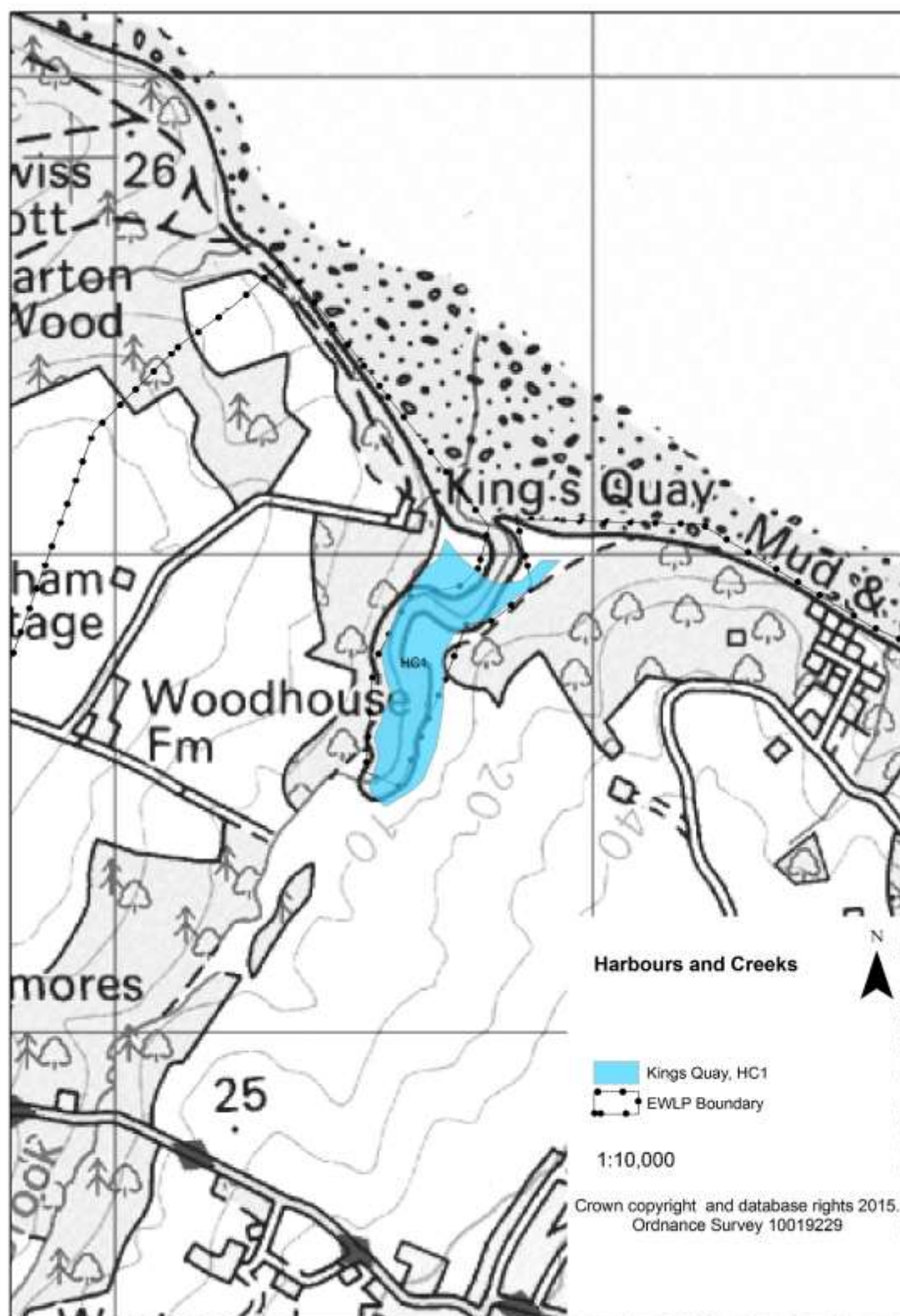


Figure 32: Harbours and Creeks Landscape Character Areas

## CHARACTER AREA HC1: KING'S QUAY



## **Location and description**

Located in the north west of the East Wight area this small creek is surrounded by woodland, has a tranquil and secretive character and is of high nature conservation value. It is located in the Wootton Bridge and Whippingham civil parishes. An estuarine environment partially enclosed by a shingle spit with an underlying geology of Bembridge Marls, Bembridge Limestone, Headon Beds and Osborne Beds overlain by Alluvium and Tidal and Beach Flat deposits. Elevation ranges from sea level to less than 5 metres above Ordnance Datum.

The whole area falls within the Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The area is unsettled the only built structure being a small stone causeway which cuts across the estuary. Palmer's Brook flows into the area from the woodland and farmland to the south.

The area falls within the Northern Lowlands Historic Landscape Character Area and medieval parishes of Wootton and Whippingham.

This wetland area is of high nature conservation value. It has international value conferred through its inclusion in the Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar and Special Protection Area recognising the importance of its estuarine environment in particular for bird species. It is also part of the Solent Maritime Special Conservation Area internationally important for its estuarine environment including areas of salt meadows and *Spartina* swards.

The area is nationally recognised through its designation as part of the King's Quay Shore Site of Special Scientific Interest, for these same features and for the low cliffs and ancient woodland areas which flank the estuary creating an area of great ecological diversity. It is also geologically important for its exposed Osborne Beds which are often rich with fossilised fish remains also part of its SSSI citation.

Part of the mudflats are included in Environmental Stewardship as part of the higher level scheme.

There are no public rights of way in this private area. Occasional access is gained by sailing craft during high tide conditions and by those walking along the beach at low tide (although the muddy shore can be treacherous).

## **Key Characteristics**

- Tranquil estuarine environment
- Largely unchanged in character and undeveloped with the exception of the old causeway wall
- Flanked by ancient woodland
- High nature conservation value

### **Past forces for change**

- Coastal erosion
- Sea level rise
- Possible diffuse pollution issues from flows entering the estuary

### **Future forces for change**

- Coastal erosion
- Sea level rise
- Condition of water flows coming into the estuary

### **Condition and Character**

The overall condition of the features of this character area is judged to be **good** and the character is judged to be **strong**.

### **Sensitivities**

- Estuarine environment of high nature conservation and landscape value
- Ancient woodland flanking the edges of the estuary
- Tranquillity and solitude afforded by the area

### **Landscape Strategy**

- Conserve the character and inherent qualities of this important estuarine and wetland area. These include the mudflats, sand banks, gravel spits, salt marsh, ancient woodland and brackish areas where the freshwater of Palmer's Brook meet the saline tidal waters, and the area's tranquillity.

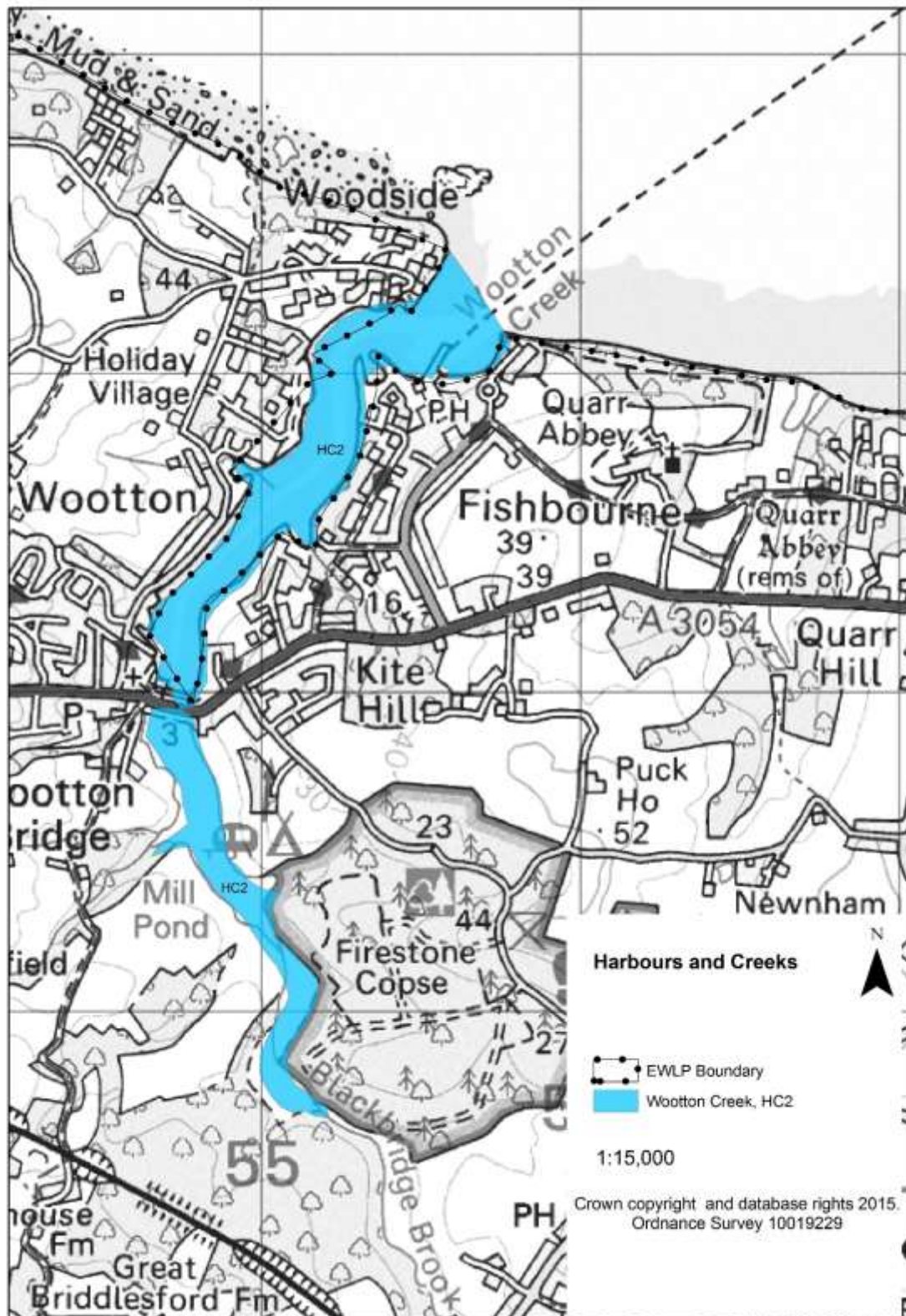
### **Landscape Guidelines**

- Conserve the nature conservation importance of this estuarine area
- Retain the ancient woodland cover which flanks the estuary
- Allow for the continuation of coastal erosion and the resulting exposure of fossilised remains
- Conserve the areas tranquillity





## CHARACTER AREA HC2: WOOTTON CREEK





## **Location and description**

This character area is located east of the village of Wootton Bridge and west of the settlement of Fishbourne. It extends and is navigable subject to tidal conditions from the Solent in the north inland to Wootton Bridge. The bridge at Wootton Bridge contains sluice gates retaining a large area of standing water in the Old Mill Pond to the south of the bridge and gradually narrowing further south between Briddlesford Copse and Firestone Copse. It is located in the civil parishes of Wootton Bridge, Havenstreet & Ashe and Fishbourne. An area of contrast with the navigable creek north of the bridge at Wootton Bridge being busy and popular with small boats and sailing ships with many waterside properties, jetties and moorings and also the location of the Wightlink Fishbourne to Portsmouth Car Ferry terminal in the north east of the area; and the largely undeveloped Old Mill Pond and creek south of the bridge with a more tranquil character.

Underlying geology includes Bembridge Marls, Bembridge Limestone, Headon Beds and Osborne Beds with large areas of Alluvium, Beach and Tidal flat deposits. Elevation ranges from sea level to less than 5 metres above Ordnance Datum.

The Old Mill Pond and wooded creek in the south falls within the Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Development is largely located on the edge of in adjacent character areas with the exception of Wootton Bridge and a number of moorings and jetties to the north. The area lies within the Northern Lowlands Historic Landscape Character Area and the medieval parishes of Wootton, Arreton and Binstead.

This area has great nature conservation importance. The navigable creek north of the bridge at Wootton Bridge is part of the Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar and Special Protection Area signifying its importance as an estuarine and wetland area particularly for bird species. This area is also part of the Ryde Sands and Wootton Creek Site of Special Scientific Interest, national recognition for the same features.

South of the bridge the area is partly within the Briddlesford Copses Special Conservation Area, international recognition of the importance of these wetland habitats and their interrelationship with adjacent ancient woodland and grassland areas and the species they support. The Old Mill Pond is also a Site of Interest for Nature Conservation. This area falls within the North Eastern Woods Biodiversity Opportunity Area.

## **Key Characteristics**

- Estuarine environment of high nature conservation value
- Contrast between the busy navigable area to the north and the tranquil undeveloped area to the south

### **Past forces for change**

- Development of properties, businesses and increased use of part of the area for maritime recreation
- Development of the cross Solent car ferry service
- Sea level rise
- Possible diffuse pollution from flows entering the estuary

### **Future forces for change**

- Further development and access to the estuary
- Sea level rise
- Diffuse pollution and then condition of water flows coming into the Mill Pond and estuary

### **Condition and Character**

The overall condition of the features of this character area is judged to be **good** and its character is judged to be **strong**.

### **Sensitivities**

- Estuarine environment of high nature conservation and historic environment value
- Tranquillity of the Old Mill Pond and wooded creek

### **Landscape Strategy**

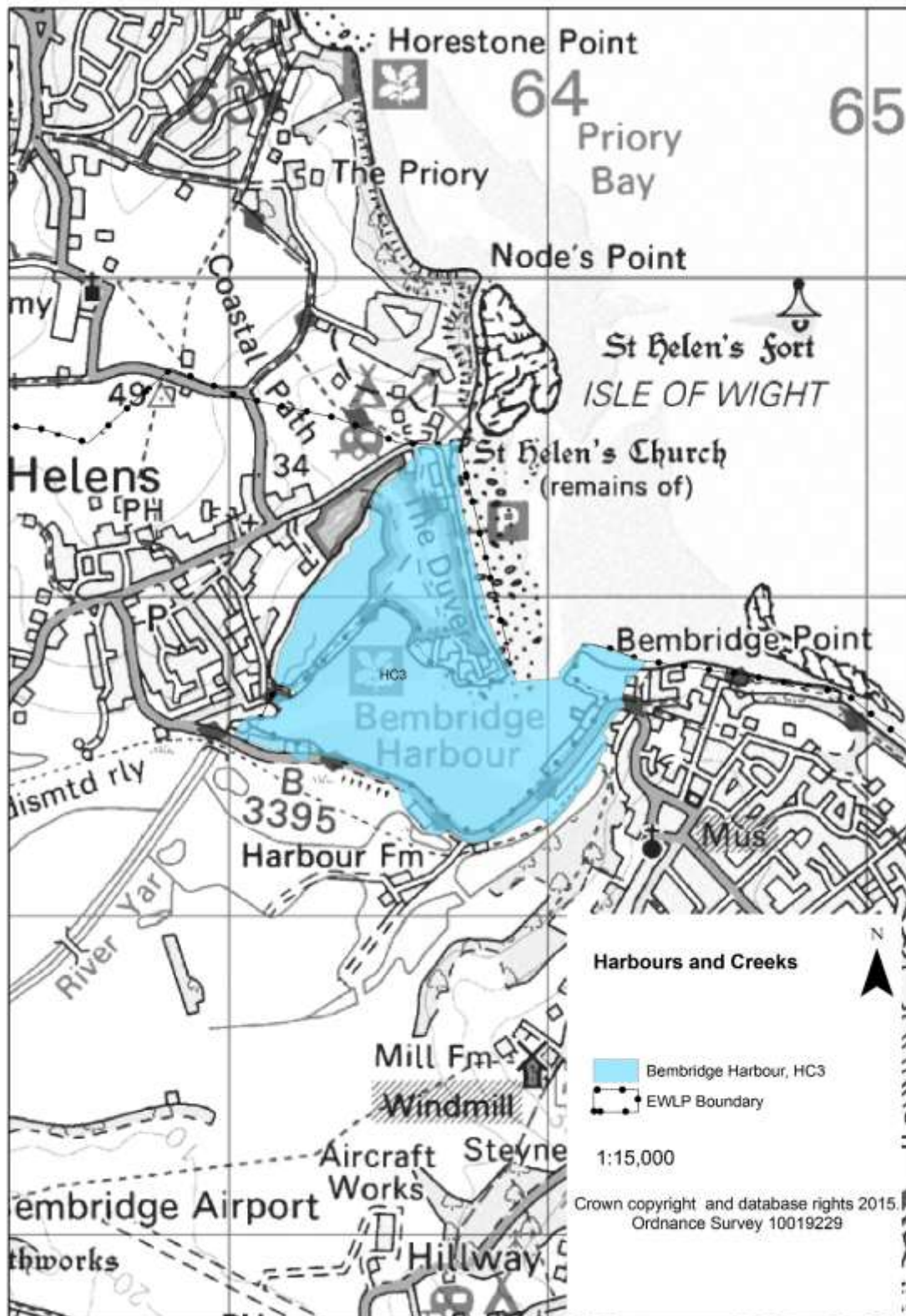
- Conserve the character and inherent qualities of this estuarine area. These include the important nature conservation habitats such as mudflats, shingle spits and sand banks, brackish areas and adjacent woodlands.

### **Landscape Guidelines**

- Conserve the nature conservation importance of this estuarine area
- Retain ancient woodland cover which flanks the southern parts of the area
- Carefully consider the impact of any development proposals on the estuarine environment
- Retain the tranquil character of the southern part of the area



## CHARACTER AREA HC3: BEMBRIDGE HARBOUR



## Location and description

This character area is located in the east of the East Wight between the villages of St Helens and Bembridge where the Eastern Yar river flows into the Solent. It consists of a large tidal estuary partially enclosed from the sea by a large spit and sand dune complex on the St Helens side known as The Duver and a smaller sand dune complex on the Bembridge side known as Bembridge Point. It falls within the civil parishes of Bembridge and St Helen's. It is a busy harbour with many businesses located along Embankment Road and on part of The Duver. There are many moorings in the harbour area, a sailing club, a number of private houseboats moored along Embankment Road.

Underlying geology is Bembridge Marls overlain with various drift deposits including Blown Sand; Tidal Flat deposits; and Beach and Tidal Flat deposits. Elevation ranges from sea level to less than 5 metres above Ordnance Datum.

Embankment road was built in the late C19th for the provision of road and rail access between St Helen's and Bembridge. It was the final stage in the various stages of reclamation of land in the former Brading Haven which was historically navigable to the town of Brading in the south. A tidal mill causeway is located in the west of the area. No longer used for the adjacent St Helen's Mill it is now a public footpath and part of the route of the Isle of Wight Coastal Path. There are two listed structures in the area: A drinking fountain at the entrance of the former Spithead Hotel Grade II; and St Helen's Old Church Tower Grade II (this is also a Sea Mark being located close to the shore and being painted white on the seaward facade). Part of the very east of the area is within the Bembridge Conservation Area and part of the very west of the area is within the St Helen's Conservation Area. The whole area is within the medieval parishes of St Helen's and Brading and the Brading Haven and Bembridge Isle Historic Landscape Character Area.

An important area for nature conservation with parts falling within the Solent and Southampton Water Special Protection Area and Ramsar site due to its international wetland significance and in particular its importance for bird species. The very edge of the Solent and Isle of Wight Lagoons Special Area of Conservation is within this area. These are internationally significant saline and brackish lagoons.

The area also lies within the Brading Haven and St Helens Ledges Special Scientific Interest national recognition for the same habitats and features including the extensive and species rich area of sand dunes at The Duver and Bembridge Point.

The area also lies within the Eastern Yar Valley Biodiversity Opportunity Area.

Public access in the area includes a number of public rights of way and wider access on the sand dunes and grasslands at The Duver (National Trust) and at Bembridge

Point. The Duver beach is popular with local residents and visitors to the area. The seawall, beach huts, cafe and parking creating a seaside feel.

### **Key Characteristics**

- Open and flat landscape with large vegetated area of sand
- Estuarine environment of nature conservation importance
- Well used area, popular with walkers and marine users

### **Past forces for change**

- Creation of Embankment Road restricting the estuary to the north of this hard barrier
- Coastal defence at The Duver
- Conservation management of The Duver

### **Future forces for change**

- Visitor pressure on linear routes on The Duver
- Sea level rise
- Changes to flood plain management in adjacent areas and impact on water flows into the estuary

### **Condition and Character**

The overall condition of the features of this character area is judged to be **good** and the overall character of the area is judged to be **strong**.

### **Sensitivities**

- Estuarine environment of high nature conservation and landscape value
- Important sand dune systems of high nature conservation and amenity value

### **Landscape Strategy**

- Conserve the character and inherent qualities of this important estuarine area. These include the mudflats, sand dune systems, coastal marsh, saline and brackish lagoons, historic features and opportunities for quiet enjoyment and access.

### **Landscape Guidelines**

- Conserve and where possible enhance the habitats of this estuarine area including adjacent sand dune, grazing marsh and lagoons.
- Monitor the impact of access in the area particularly on surface conditions of habitually used linear routes
- Work with local businesses and those using the estuary to promote its nature conservation value and importance





## LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE: PASTURE LAND



Pasture land close to Bembridge airport looking south towards Bembridge and Culver Downs.



Pasture land close at New Farm, Nunwell near Brading.



View from St Catherine's Hill looking eastwards into the pasture land of the Wydcombe Valley.

Parkland trees at Nunwell.



Cattle grazing below Bembridge Windmill.

This Landscape Character Type is located across the East Wight area on the heavier clays in the north, alongside the main watercourses and in particular the Eastern Yar river south of the central downland ridge and north of the southern downland area. It is the predominant character type of the East Wight area in terms of its extent.

Settlement is dispersed and includes many historically important buildings such as farmsteads, manor houses, grand country houses, individual rural cottages and hamlets. Larger villages are located on the edge of this area and other character types.

Hedgerows and hedgerow trees and in some areas field trees are a feature of this character type.

Ancient woodland and copses are also a feature with larger banks of woodland neighbouring the character type falling in the East Wight Woodlands Landscape Character Type.

Designed landscapes and parkland are also found in this area including the nationally important sites at Nunwell near Brading and Appuldurcombe (with its Lancelot 'Capability' Brown parkland) near Wroxall. Smaller designed landscapes are also found including the locally significant parkland at Wydcombe and gardens at The Hermitage.

A rolling landscape of irregular and in some areas more regular shaped fields which are in general small or medium in size, it has a strong pastoral character.

Some areas have experienced pressure from amenity and leisure use such as from keeping horses especially close to settlement and urban areas, but not at a level to significantly change the character of the area such as in the Changed Countryside Landscape Character Type.

The woodlands, grasslands and in some areas wetlands are often of nature conservation importance.

### **Key Characteristics:**

- Pastoral landscape of hedged small and medium sized fields
- Ancient woodland and copses
- Grassland, woodland and some wetland areas of nature conservation importance
- Parkland and designed landscapes
- Historic buildings including farmsteads, manors and country houses
- Scheduled monuments



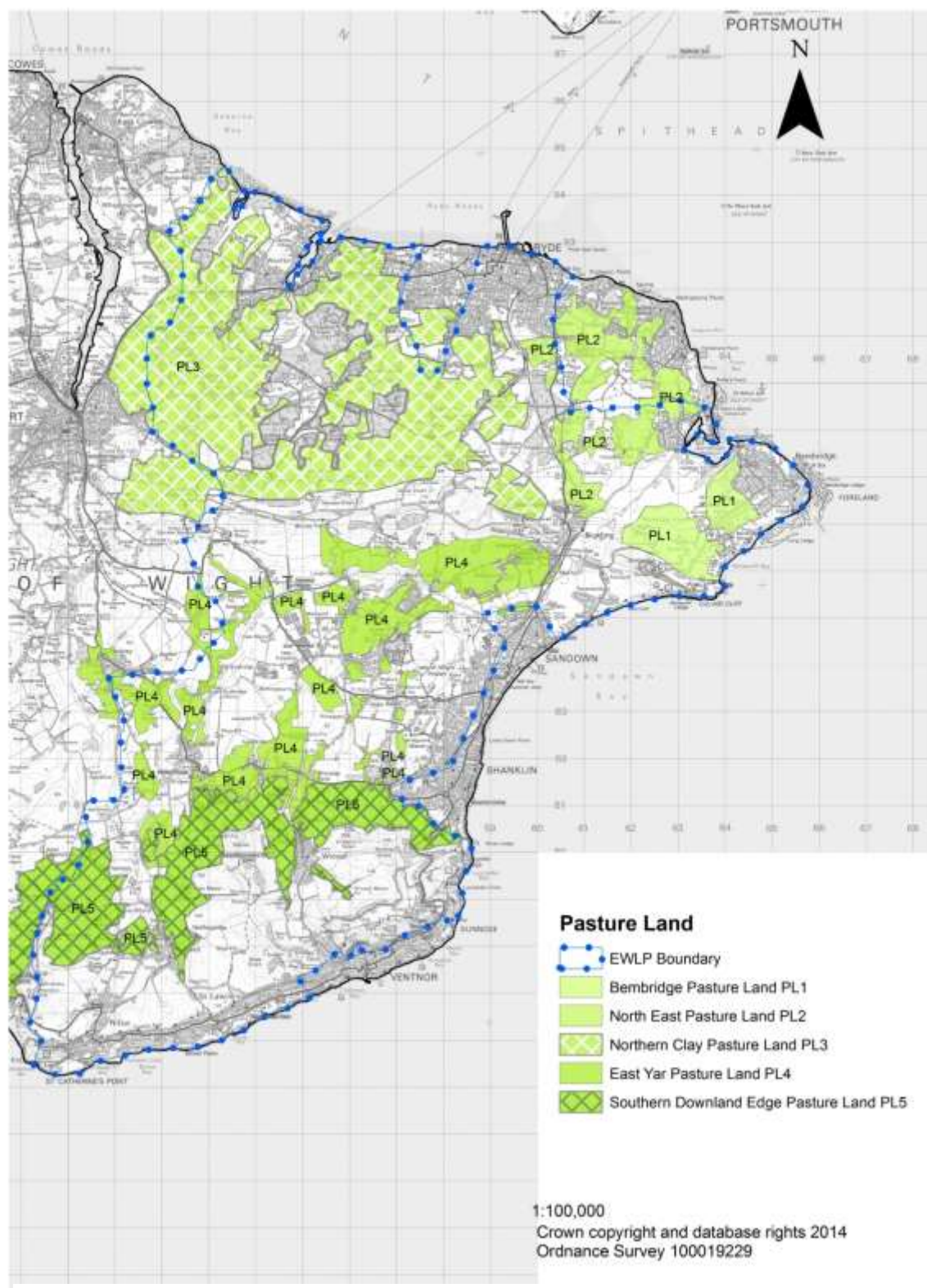
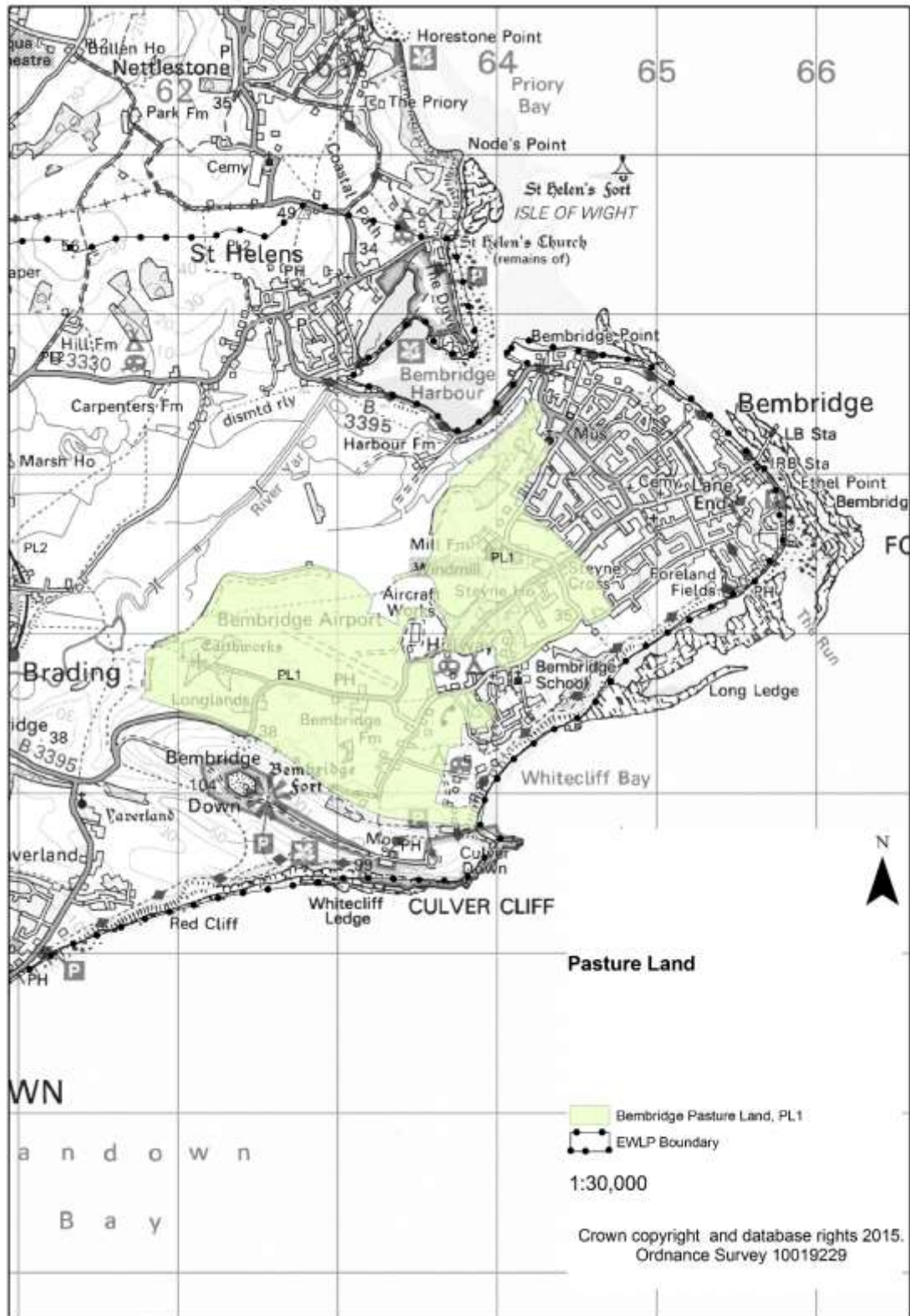


Figure 33: Pasture Land Landscape Character Areas

## CHARACTER AREA PL1: BEMBRIDGE PASTURE LAND





## Location and description

This character area is located in the east of the East Wight. It extends from the base of Bembridge and Culver Downs north and northeast to the edge of the village of Bembridge. It is fully within the civil parish of Bembridge.

A landscape of pasture fields and small copses and woodlands enclosed by hedgerows and hedgerow trees. Underlying geology in the area is Bembridge Marls, Bembridge Limestone (a small area), Headon Beds and Osborne Beds, Reading Beds, London Clay and Bracklesham Group. This is overlain with River Terrace, Alluvium, Beach and Tidal Flat, Tidal Flat and Brick Earth deposits. Elevation ranges from 10 metres above Ordnance Datum close to the valley floor in the north and west to 60 metres above Ordnance Datum at the base of the downland in the south. The landform slopes gently north and west towards the valley floor of the Eastern Yar.

This is a settled landscape with many small farmsteads and cottages. Listed buildings include: Stanwell Farm Grade II; Bembridge Farm Grade II; Former pigsties, brewhouse, bothy and cheese room at Bembridge Farm Grade II; Hay barn east of Bembridge Farm Grade II; Building between the hay barn and stabling at Bembridge Farm Grade II; Granary at Bembridge Farm Grade II; Stable and hayloft at Bembridge Farm Grade II; Wall to farmyard at Bembridge Farm Grade II; Wall to the front of Bembridge Farm Grade II; Longlands Cottage Grade II; Howgate Grade II; Steyne House Grade II; Bembridge Windmill Grade I; The Mill House Grade II; Barn and stabling south west of Mill House Grade II; Bembridge Lodge Grade II.

Steyne House Park is on the Local List as a designed landscape of local interest.

The Historic Landscape Characterisation tells us that the field patterns in the area include: ancient woodland, secondary woodland; enclosed open field and open field furlongs close to the abandoned settlement of Wolverton and dating from the medieval period; enclosure of openfield strips close to Bembridge Village and west of Whitecliff Bay dating from the post medieval period; assarts close to Steyne Wood; enclosed waste, common or green close to Mill Farm of uncertain date; reorganised fields and amalgamated fields dating from the C19th and C20th and a designed landscape at Steyne House dating from the C19th and C20th. The character area lies within the Brading Haven and Bembridge Isle Historic Landscape Character Area and the medieval parish of Brading.

A small part of the Bembridge Conservation Area is located in the very north of this character area.

Around a third of the character area is designated as part of the Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (the south of the area below the downland).

Woodland is a feature and around 20% of the area is ancient woodland including: Breaches Copse; Parrick Copse; Longlands Copse; Steyne Wood; Centurions Copse and Knowles Copse. New woodland planting has taken place close to Centurions Copse and close to Mill Farm.

This character area has important nature conservation value. Its north western edge is internationally recognised for its wetland interest as part of the Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar and Special Protection Area of particular importance for bird species. In the north of the area the edges of the Solent and Isle of Wight Lagoons Special Area of Conservation lie in this character area. More extensive areas of grassland and woodland along the north west part of this character area are nationally recognised for their nature conservation value falling within the Brading Marshes and St Helens Ledges Site of Special Scientific Interest. This part of the character area falls within the Eastern Yar Valley Biodiversity Opportunity Area.

A number of the ancient woodland sites are also recognised locally through designation as Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation including: Breaches Copse; Steyne Wood and Centurions Copse. To the south the foot of the downland is part of the Bembridge Down Site of Interest for Nature Conservation.

A landscape of grazed pasture, wetland areas and woodland around 20% of the area is benefitting from investment in conservation through the Environmental Stewardship.

The airfield for Bembridge Airport lies within this area including the surfaced landing strip.

A number of public rights of way pass through the area including the route of the Bembridge Trail which in part follows the top of the old sea wall.

### **Key Characteristics**

- Ancient woodland, hedgerows and small copses
- Nature conservation value of wetlands, woodland and grassland areas
- Historic buildings throughout the area including the last standing windmill on the Isle of Wight
- Public access including the promoted Bembridge Trail

### **Past forces for change**

- Bembridge Airport built on former pasture land
- Investment through Environmental Stewardship
- Conservation charity ownership leading to nature conservation and historic environmental conservation and enhancement
- Scrub growth and secondary woodland

### **Future forces for change**

- Continued investment through Environmental Stewardship
- Climate change, possible sea level rise and impact on wetland areas
- Scrub growth and further secondary woodland

### **Condition and Character**

Overall the condition of the features of this character area is judged to be **good** and the character of the area is judged to be **strong**.

### **Sensitivities**

- Nature conservation interest of wetlands
- Nature conservation interest of grasslands
- Nature conservation interest and historic environmental interest of ancient woodlands
- Historic environmental importance of historic buildings and structures
- Hedgerow and grazing pasture management

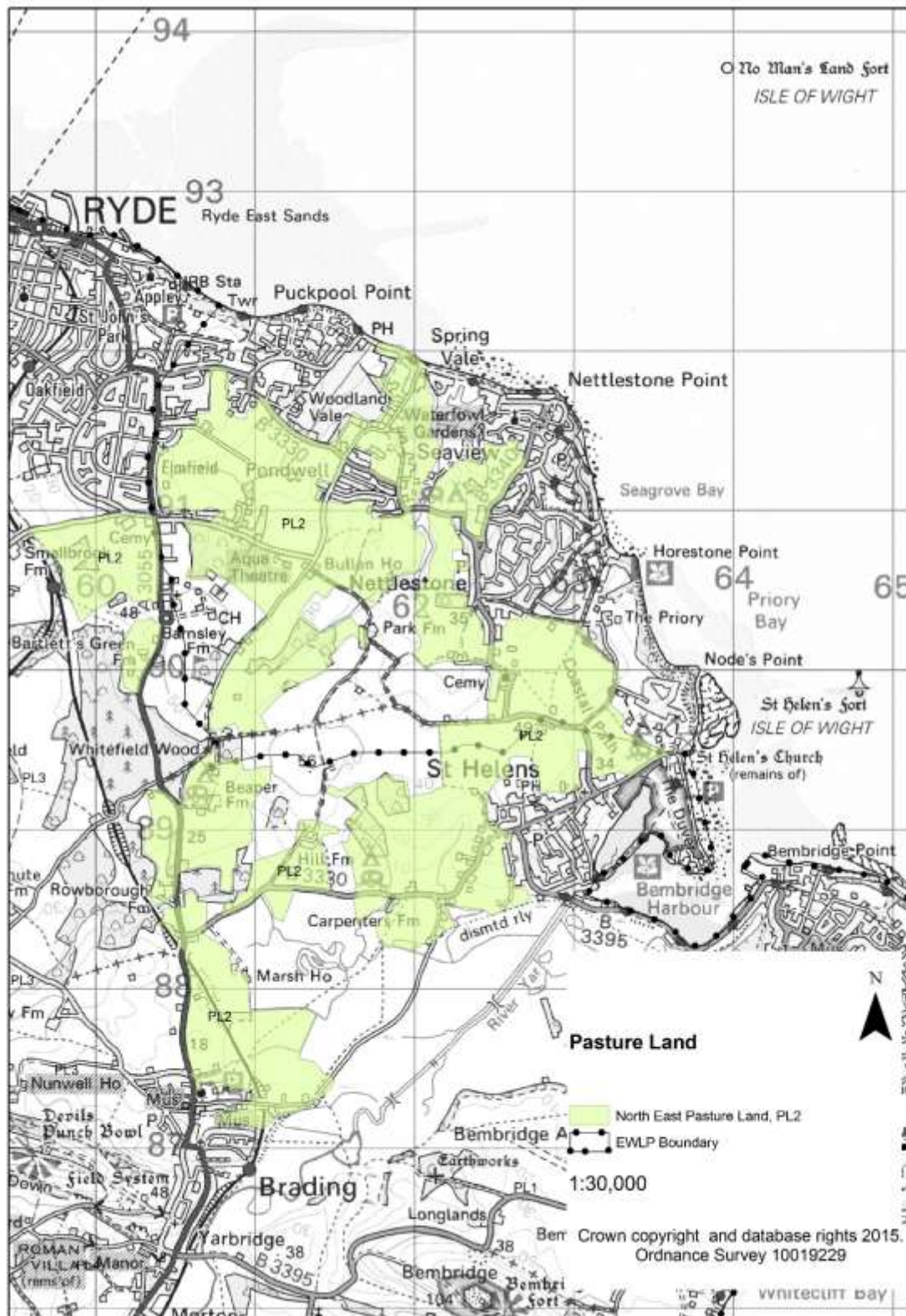
### **Landscape Strategy**

Conserve and enhance the inherent qualities and features of this landscape character area. This includes the wetlands, grasslands, woodlands, hedgerows, historic buildings and opportunities for access in the area.

### **Landscape Guidelines**

- Conserve and enhance the wetland areas of importance and potential for nature conservation
- Conserve and where possible enhance the historic buildings and structures in the area
- Continue to invest in conservation objectives via the Environmental Stewardship Scheme
- Conserve the ancient woodlands in the area
- Maintain and improve public access in the area

## CHARACTER AREA PL2: NORTH EAST PASTURE LAND



## Location and description

This landscape character area is located predominantly east of the A3055 and railway line between the towns of Brading and Ryde. It includes all the pasture land in this area and falls within a number of civil parishes including: Brading, Ryde, St Helens, and Nettlestone & Seaview.

A landscape of rolling pasture with small copses, well defined hedgerows often with mature hedgerow trees the underlying geology of the area includes: Bembridge Marls; Bembridge Limestone; Headon Beds and Osborne Beds; Bracklesham Group and a small area in the west of Hamstead Beds. These are overlain with Alluvium; River Terrace gravels and Tidal Flat deposits. Elevation ranges from sea level in the very north of the area to around 50 metres above Ordnance Datum.

A landscape of dispersed settlement of cottages and farmsteads with the exception of a small coastal community at Springvale in the north flanked by larger settled and urban areas such as Nettlestone and Seaview, Brading and Ryde. Listed buildings and structures in the area include: Hill Farm House Grade II; Barnsley Farmhouse Grade II; Beaper Farmhouse Grade II; Park Farmhouse Grade II; Fairy Hill Grade II; Oak Hill Grade II; Haven House Grade II; Springvale House and White Cottage Grade II; Vale House Grade II and the Church of St Helen Grade II. The Coastguard House and Pepita the former Coastguard Station at Springvale are on the Local List for their historic importance.

A small part of the St Helens Conservation area falls in this character area in the very south and a small part of the Seaview Conservation area is located on the edge of this character area in the north east.

The Historic Landscape Characterisation tells us that the field pattern of today's landscape is based on land assarted from woodland in the medieval period, enclosure of waste, common or green in the medieval period, enclosure of pasture of meadows and enclosure of open field strips in the post medieval period, subdivision of fields between Seaview and St Helens in the C16th, enclosure of parkland in the C19th at Fairy Hill, Woodlands Vale and Westridge and the reorganisation and amalgamation of fields in the C19th and C20th. The character area falls within the Brading Haven and Bembridge Isle and Northern Lowlands Historic Landscape Character Areas and the medieval parishes of St Helens and Brading.

The very edge of parkland of Woodlands Vale is located in the north west of this area and is on the national Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England.

Ancient woodlands include: Eight Acre Copse; Spring Copse; Pennyfeathers and Cothey Bottom Copse. A small area of additional woodland planting has taken place on the edge of Whitefield Woods in the west of the area.

Parts of this landscape are internationally important for their nature conservation interest as part of the Solent and Southampton Water Special Protection Area and Ramsar site (the very south of the area at North Marsh Brading and in the very north at Springvale Beach). These areas are also nationally recognised as part of the Brading Marshes and St Helens Ledges Site of Special Scientific Interest (in the south) and Ryde Sands and Wootton Creek Site of Special Scientific Interest (in the north).

Other wetlands, grasslands and woodland areas are locally recognised as Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation including: Barnsley Farm; Nodes Point Meadow; Nettlestone Marshes; Longlands Copse; Bullen Cross Woods; Pennyfeathers; Eight Acres Copse; Bartletts Green (Whitefield Woods).

The south of the area falls within the Eastern Yar Valley Biodiversity Opportunity Area.

Around 30% of the area is benefitting from investment in conservation through the Environmental Stewardship scheme as part of the entry level and entry level with higher level schemes.

There are more limited opportunities for access in this area via the public rights of way network and no open access areas.

### **Key Characteristics**

- Hedgerows, hedgerow trees and copses
- Ancient woodland
- Rolling pastoral landscape on heavier clay soils
- Historic farmsteads dispersed throughout the area
- Historic buildings and designed landscape in the coastal area in the north close to Springvale
- Grassland areas

### **Past forces for change**

- Investment through Environmental Stewardship
- Increase in equestrian use of some smaller pasture fields and associated structures and equipment

### **Future forces for change**

- Continued investment through Environmental Stewardship
- Further pressure for leisure and amenity use of fields particularly close to settlement areas



## Condition and Character

The overall condition of the features of this character area is judged to be **good** and the character of the area judged to be **strong**.

## Sensitivities

- Hedgerows, hedgerow trees, copses and ancient woodlands
- Nature conservation value of woodlands, wetlands and grasslands
- Historic buildings (particularly farmsteads) and designed landscapes
- Enclosed character

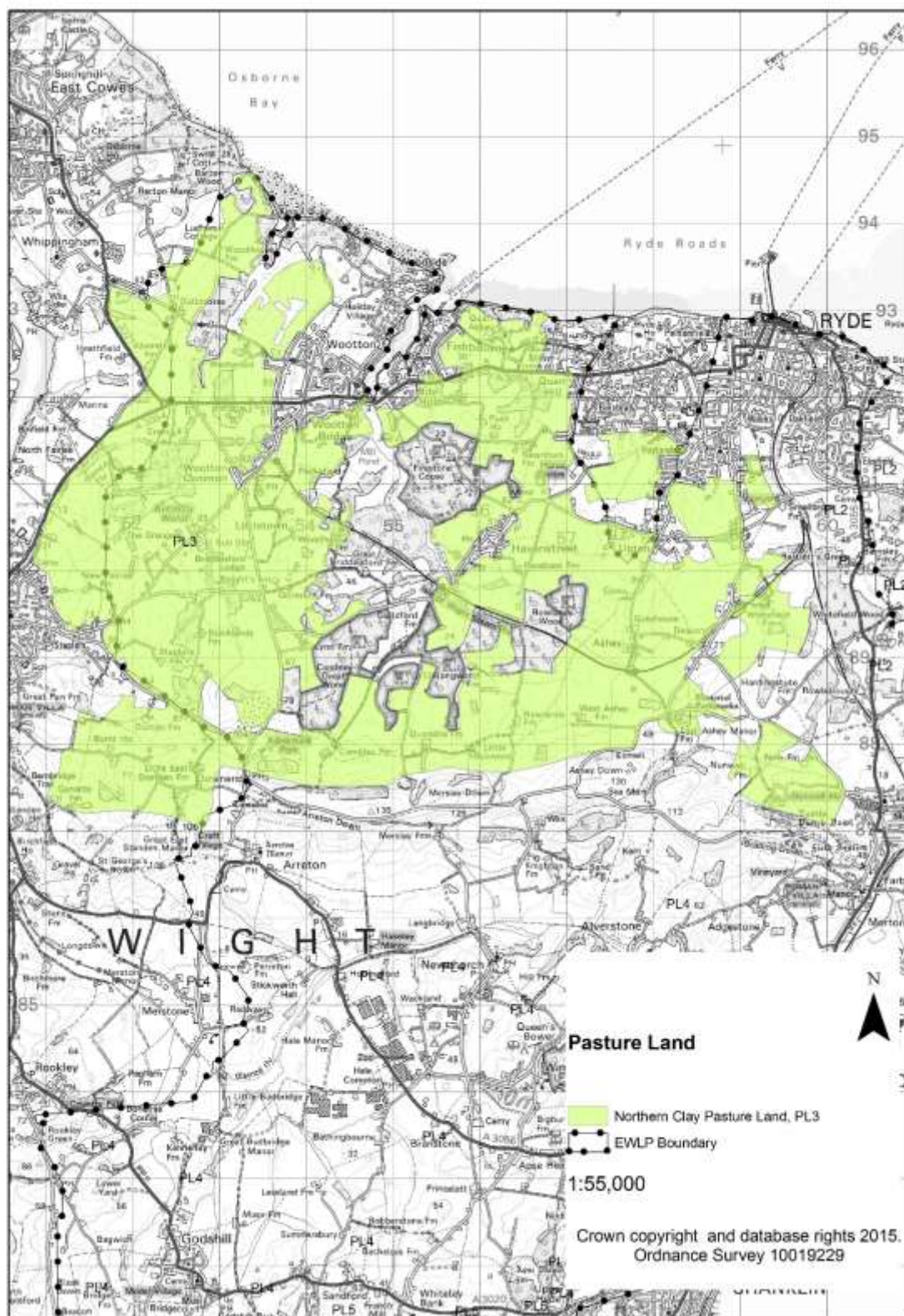
## Landscape Strategy

Conserve and enhance the inherent qualities and features of this landscape character area. These include the historic buildings (farmsteads and coastal properties), designed landscapes, ancient woodlands, hedgerows, copses, wetlands and grasslands of value to wildlife, access opportunities.

## Landscape Guidelines

- Conserve and enhance the hedgerows and hedgerow trees in this character areas through appropriate management
- Conserve the ancient woodland areas
- Work with owners using fields to keep horses to encourage sensitive approaches to pasture management, hedgerow maintenance, and siting and maintenance of structures and other paraphernalia
- Conserve and enhance the historic environmental features which contribute to the character of this area such as its listed buildings
- Retain and maintain access to the area via the public rights of way network
- Conserve and enhance grasslands and wetlands for nature conservation benefit

## CHARACTER AREA PL3: NORTHERN CLAY PASTURE LAND



## Location and description

This large landscape character area is located in the north west of the East Wight. Extending from the edge of Fairlee Road north of the town of Newport in the west to the western side of the Ryde to Brading railway line in the east, and from the coastline at Whippingham and Quarr in the north to the base of the central chalk ridge in the south. As an extensive area it falls within a number of civil parishes including: Newport; Arreton; Wootton Bridge; Havenstreet and Ashey; Ryde; Brading; Fishbourne and Whippingham.

The predominant underlying geology is heavy clays including: Hamstead Beds; Bracklesham Group; London Clay; Reading Formation; Headon Beds and Osborne Beds. In the south west of the area the geology includes Upper Chalk, Lower and Middle Chalk, Upper Greensand and Gault. This is overlain in some areas by Alluvium, River Terraces, Brick Earth, and Beach and Tidal deposits. Elevation ranges from sea level in the north of the area to around 100 metres above Ordnance Datum in the south.

A rolling landscape gradually sloping towards the northern coastline with small and medium sized fields often irregular in shape but in some areas more linear in pattern and enclosed by mature hedgerows with hedgerow trees. Field trees are also a feature of this landscape particularly in the east of the area around Hardingshute, Nunwell and Upton.

This area has a number of dispersed farmsteads and rural cottages and a small residential cluster close to Quarr. Listed buildings include: Nunwell House Grade II\*; Coach House at Nunwell Grade II; Terrace wall to the east of the east front of Nunwell Grade II; West Lodge to Nunwell House Grade II; Walled garden to the north west of Nunwell House Grade II; Gate, gate piers and wall to Nunwell House Grade II; East Lodge to Nunwell House Grade II; Nunwell Farmhouse Grade II; Barn to the south east of Nunwell Farmhouse Grade II; Former stabling now hay barn at Nunwell Farm Grade II; Little East Standen Grade II; Barn at Little East Standen Grade II; New Farmhouse Grade II; Barn at New Farmhouse Grade II; Granary at New Farmhouse Grade II; Combley Farmhouse Grade II; West Ashey Cottages Grade II; East Ashey Manor Farmhouse Grade II; East ranges of buildings at West Ashey Farm Grade II; West block of buildings at West Ashey Farm Grade II; Rowlands Farmhouse Grade II; Great Whitefield Manor Grade II; Little Upton Farmhouse Grade II; Pondcast Farmhouse Grade II; Kempfill Farmhouse Grade II; Binstead and Havenstreet War Shrine Grade II; Newnham Farmhouse Grade II; Palmers Lodge Grade II; Remains of Old Quarr Abbey at Quarr Grade II; Precinct walls of Old Quarr Abbey Grade II; Quarr Abbey Grade I; Old Alverstone Cottages Grade II; Ludham Cottage Grade II.

There are a number of scheduled monuments within this character area including: Downend Romano-British Villa; Quarr Abbey Ruins (Heritage at Risk site due to

vegetation growth and neglect issues although plans are now in place to address this); Two fish ponds associated with Quarr Abbey; Two bowl barrows 180m west north west of Puck House, Fishbourne (Heritage at Risk due extensive significant problems); Medieval settlement 100 metres south east and 350 metres east of East Ashey Manor (Heritage at Risk - generally unsatisfactory with major localised problems).

Nunwell Park is on the national Register of Parks and Gardens of Significant Historic Interest in England.

There are a number of buildings and structures in this area which are locally significant and are on the Local List. These include: Keepers Cottage in Arreton; World War I Memorial Cross at Ashey Cemetery; War Memorial Havenstreet; Palmers Lodge; Alverstone Farm and Alverstone Gate Lodge.

The Historic Landscape Characterisation tells us that the field patterns in this character area are a result of significant assarting of woodland and enclosure of heathland (near to Standen Heath) in the post medieval period; enclosure of waste, common and green in the medieval, C18th and C19th; enclosure of pasture and meadow in the C19th; and enclosure of parkland (at Nunwell) and amalgamation of fields in the C20th. The character area predominantly falls within the Northern Lowlands Historic Landscape Character Area, a small area around and in the south east of the area a small part is within the South Wight Sandstone with Gravel Historic Landscape Character Area. The area falls within the medieval parishes of Newchurch; Wootton; Arreton; Brading; Binstead and Whippingham.

Around a third of the area is designated as part of the Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (in the south close to the downs, in the north close to King's Quay and at Quarr).

Woodland is a feature of this landscape character area although large blocks of woodland which are dominant in their own right have their own landscape character area as part of the East Wight Woodlands Landscape Character Type. Many of the copses and woodlands throughout the area are ancient woodlands including: Wroxall Bottom Copse; Standen Copse; Quarrel's Copse; Lushington Copse; Staplers Copse; Elenor's Grove; Dunnage Copse; Little Briddlesford Moor; Fattingspark Copse; Woodhouse Copse; Staynes Copse; New Copse; Ashlake Copse; Tobacco Pipe Copse; Shooting Covert; Puckers Copse; Smallbrook Heath; Whitefield Farm Wood; Saltmoor Copse.

Additional woodland areas have been recently planted close to existing copses and woodland blocks throughout the area.

The very edges of this character area are of international and national nature conservation interest and value. These include the internationally important wetland

environment designated as the Solent and Southampton Water Special Protection Area and Ramsar site along the north coast and its estuaries; the edge of Briddlesford Copses Special Area of Conservation, the edge of Ryde Sands and Wootton Creek Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Locally woodland and grassland Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation include: Ramcroft Copse; Quarr Abbey; Fatteningpark Copse; Standen Heath; Staplers Heath; Ashlake Copse; Dame Anthony's Common; Swanmore Meadows; Smallbrook Heath; Nunwell Park; Kittenocks; Quarrels Copse and Woodhouse Copse.

Around half of this area is benefitting from investment in conservation objectives through the Environmental Stewardship as part of entry level, entry level with higher level and higher level schemes.

There are many public rights of way which provide access through the area although in some parts of the area these are less frequent such as west of Briddlesford Road. A small area of open access land is located on St Georges Down in the south west of the area.

### **Key Characteristics**

- Rolling pastoral landscape with small copses, hedgerows and hedgerow trees
- Field trees are a feature of the east of the area around Hardingshute, Nunwell and Upton
- Historic farmsteads are located throughout the area
- The designed landscape and historic buildings at Nunwell contribute strongly to the character of that part of the area
- Ancient woodland areas
- Nature conservation value of woodland and grassland areas within the area and wetland areas on its edges
- Scheduled monuments a number of which are currently at risk

### **Past forces for change**

- Investment through Environmental Stewardship
- Neglect and damage to scheduled monuments
- Increase in equestrian use of some smaller pasture fields and associated structures and paraphernalia

### **Future forces for change**

- Further investment through Environmental Stewardship
- Further pressure for leisure and amenity use of pasture fields particularly close to settlement areas
- Changes to farm gate prices and agricultural commodity prices particularly in relation to remaining areas of dairy farming

## Condition and Character

The overall condition of the features of this character area is judged to be **good** and the overall character is judged to be **moderate**

## Sensitivities

- Hedgerows, hedgerow trees and field trees
- Ancient woodlands and copses
- Historic buildings (particularly farmsteads) and designed landscapes
- Enclosed character
- Historic sites at risk

## Landscape Strategy

Conserve and enhance the inherent qualities and features of this landscape character area. These include the historic buildings (farmsteads and grand houses), designed landscapes, ancient woodlands, scheduled monuments (particularly those at risk), hedgerows, hedgerow trees, field trees, copses, grasslands and peripheral wetland areas of value to wildlife and access opportunities.

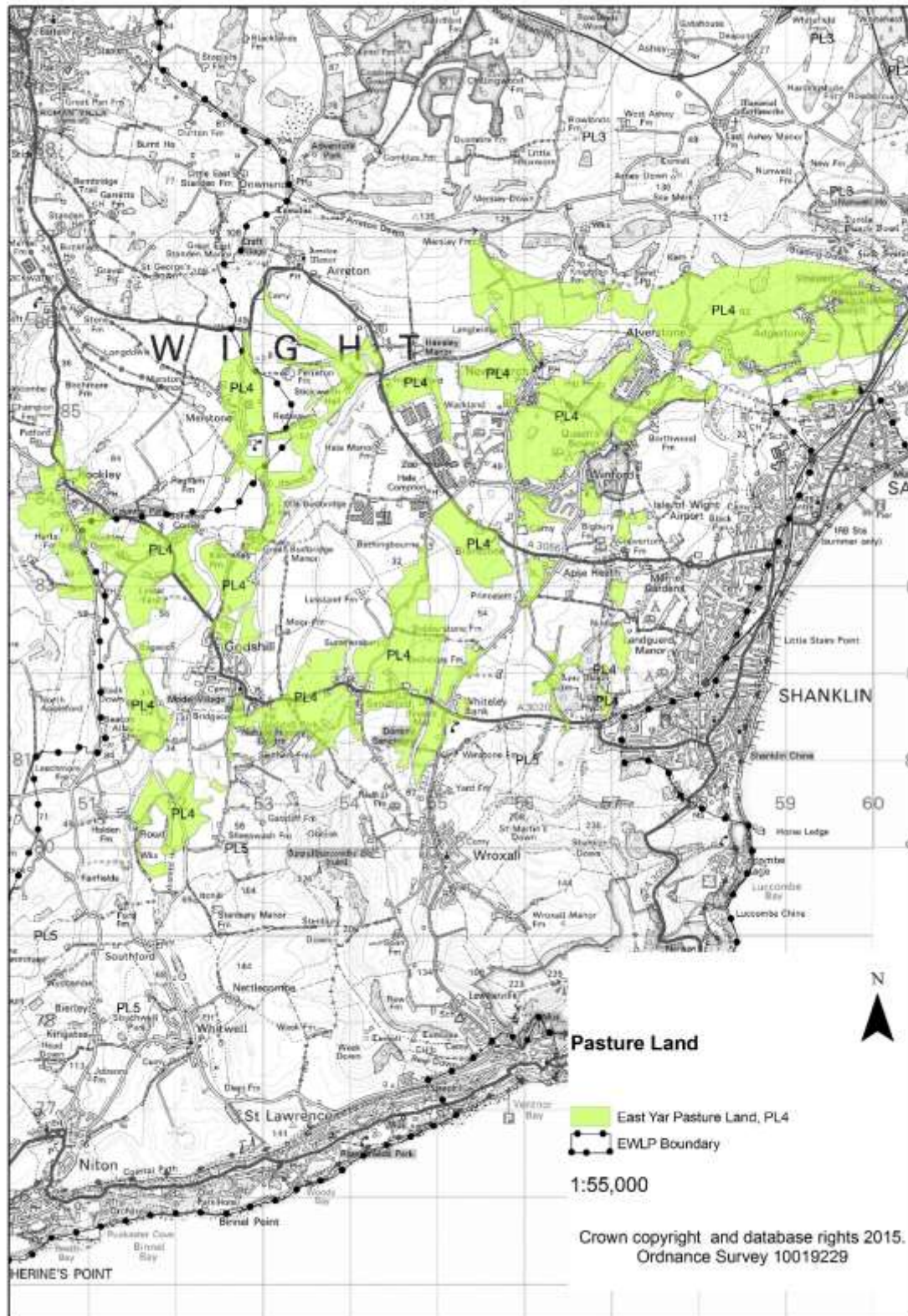
## Landscape Guidelines

- Conserve and enhance the hedgerows, hedgerow trees
- Conserve the ancient woodland, copses and field trees
- Work with owners using fields to keep horses to encourage sensitive approaches to pasture management, hedgerow maintenance and the siting and maintenance of structures and other paraphernalia
- Conserve and enhance the historic environmental features which contribute to the character of this area such as its listed buildings, scheduled monuments and undesignated sites. Particular attention should be given to those structures and sites on the heritage at risk register
- Retain and maintain access to the area via the public rights of way network
- Conserve and enhance grasslands and peripheral wetlands for nature conservation benefit





## CHARACTER AREA PL4: EAST YAR PASTURE LAND



## Location and description

Located in areas adjacent to the valley floor of the Eastern Yar and between its tributary streams (including Sctochell's Brook and the Wroxall Stream), extending from Rookley in the west to Adgestone in the east and southwards to the edges of the hamlets of Sandford and Roud. The character area falls within the civil parishes of Brading, Godshill, Wroxall, Shanklin, Arreton, Newchurch, Sandown and Rookley.

This character area is fairly dispersed and often located immediately adjacent to Valley Floor or Arable Farmland character areas on wetter land where the water table is higher. Hedgerows are the usual means of enclosure. Fields are small or medium in size and often irregular in shape with those in the very west of the area being larger and more regular in shape.

Underlying geology includes large areas of Ferruginous Sands, Sandrock Formation and Carstone with some areas of Gault, Wealden Group, Wealden Clay and Atherfield Clay in the east of the area. This is overlain with River Terrace gravels, Alluvium and a small area of Peat deposits. Elevation ranges from around 10 metres above Ordnance Datum to 90 metres above Ordnance Datum.

Around 55% of the character area is designated as part of the Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Alverstone area, Godshill and Rookley areas).

There are many settlements on the edge of this character area and dispersed cottages and farmsteads throughout the area. Listed buildings and structures are numerous and include: Godshill Park House Grade II; Barn in the grounds of the old vicarage at Godshill Grade II; Apse Manor Country Hotel Grade II; Large barn at Apse Manor Grade II; Stabling at Apse Manor Grade II; Small barn at Apse Manor Grade II; Stabling and lodge at Apse Manor Grade II; Small stable at Apse Manor Grade II; Bagwich Grade II; Barn at Bagwich Grade II; Harts Farmhouse Grade II; Great Budbridge Grade II; Little Budbridge Grade II; Redway Farmhouse Grade II; Coach house stabling to Hackney horses at Redway Grade II; Mersley Farmhouse Grade II; Horringford House Grade II; Water pump attached to brewhouse at Horringford House Grade II; Oaklea and Alverstone Farmhouse Grade II; Haybarn and cattle shelter at Alverstone Farm Grade II; Stable to the north west of Oaklea and Alverstone Farm Grade II; Brading Roman Villa Grade I; Lower Knighton Grade II; Barn at Lower Knighton Grade II; Cart shed at Lower Knighton Grade II; Granary at Lower Knighton Grade II; Gatepiers in front of Lower Knighton Grade II.

Brading Roman Villa is a Scheduled Monument.

The War Memorial at Godshill and Former Meeting Room at Rookley are on the Local List for their historic importance.

A small part of the Godshill and Arreton Conservation Areas is located in this character area close to these settlements.

The Historic Landscape Characterisation tells us that the origin of the field pattern in this character area is fairly complex and includes: assarting from woodland from the early medieval period through to the C20th; enclosure of heathland during the medieval and post medieval period; enclosure of pasture and meadow from the early medieval through to the C20th; enclosure of open field/ open field furlong and open field strip in the medieval and post medieval periods; enclosure of parkland in the C19th and C20th; enclosure of marsh in the C20th; amalgamation, re-organisation and sub division of fields in the C17th, C18th, C19th and C20th. The character area falls within the South Wight Sandstone and Gravel, Arreton Valley, and Newchurch Environs and Sandown Bay Historic Landscape Character Areas and the medieval parishes of Newchurch, Godshill, Areton and Brading.

A number of small copses or the edges of woodland in the adjacent East Wight Woodlands Character Type that are ancient woodlands fall within this area including: Beech Copse; Park Withy Bed; Botttom's Copse; Chiddles Copse; Horringford Withybed; the edge of Borthwood Copse; the edge of America Wood; Youngwoods Copse; Alverstone Lynch; Borthwood Lynch; Perreton Farm Wood and Rowdown Copse. Additional woodland planting has taken place at Mersley, Redway and Bathingbourne.

The edge of this character area is close to the America Wood and Alverstone Marshes Sites of Special Scientific Interest nationally important for their woodland, wood pasture and wetland interest.

Many of the ancient woodlands, marshes, wetlands, withybeds and grassland areas are locally recognised for their nature conservation value as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation including: Bunkers Copse; Youngwoods Copse; Alverstone Marshes East; Rowdown Copse; Bohemia Bog; Redway Farm; Perreton Down and Marsh; Horringford Withybed; Newchurch Marshes; Pope's Farm Marsh; Lynch Copse; Borthwood Copse (edge); Apse Castle Wood; Ninham/Barton Withybeds; Great Budbridge; Bottom's Copse; Appuldurcombe Down (part); and Upper Yar Valley (part).

Parts of this character area fall within the Eastern Yar Valley and Eastern Central Ridge Biodiversity Opportunity Areas.

Around 30% of the area has benefitted from Environmental Stewardship and the former Countryside Stewardship schemes as part of their entry level and entry level with higher level scheme.

There are many public rights of way which provide access to this area.

## **Key Characteristics**

- Enclosed pastoral landscape in close proximity to valley floor and arable areas
- Ancient woodland areas
- Hedgerows and some hedgerow trees
- Historic farmsteads dispersed throughout the areas

## **Past forces for change**

- Investment through Environmental Stewardship
- Increases in equestrian use of some smaller pasture fields with associated structures and equipment
- Scrub growth and development of secondary woodland

## **Future forces for change**

- Continued investment through Environmental Stewardship
- Further pressure for leisure and amenity use of fields particularly where these are close to settlement areas
- Scrub growth

## **Condition and Character**

The overall condition of the features of this character area is judged to be **good** and the character of the area is judged to be **good**.

## **Sensitivities**

- Hedgerows, copses and ancient woodlands
- Nature conservation value and potential of grassland, wetlands and woodland
- Historic buildings (particularly farmsteads)
- Enclosed and pastoral character
- Brading Roman Villa and archaeological potential of the surrounding area

## **Landscape Strategy**

Conserve and enhance the inherent qualities and features of this character area. These include historic buildings (particularly farmsteads), archaeological importance of the area (particularly around Brading Roman Villa), hedgerows, copses (in particular ancient woodlands), grasslands, access opportunities and the areas wildlife interest.

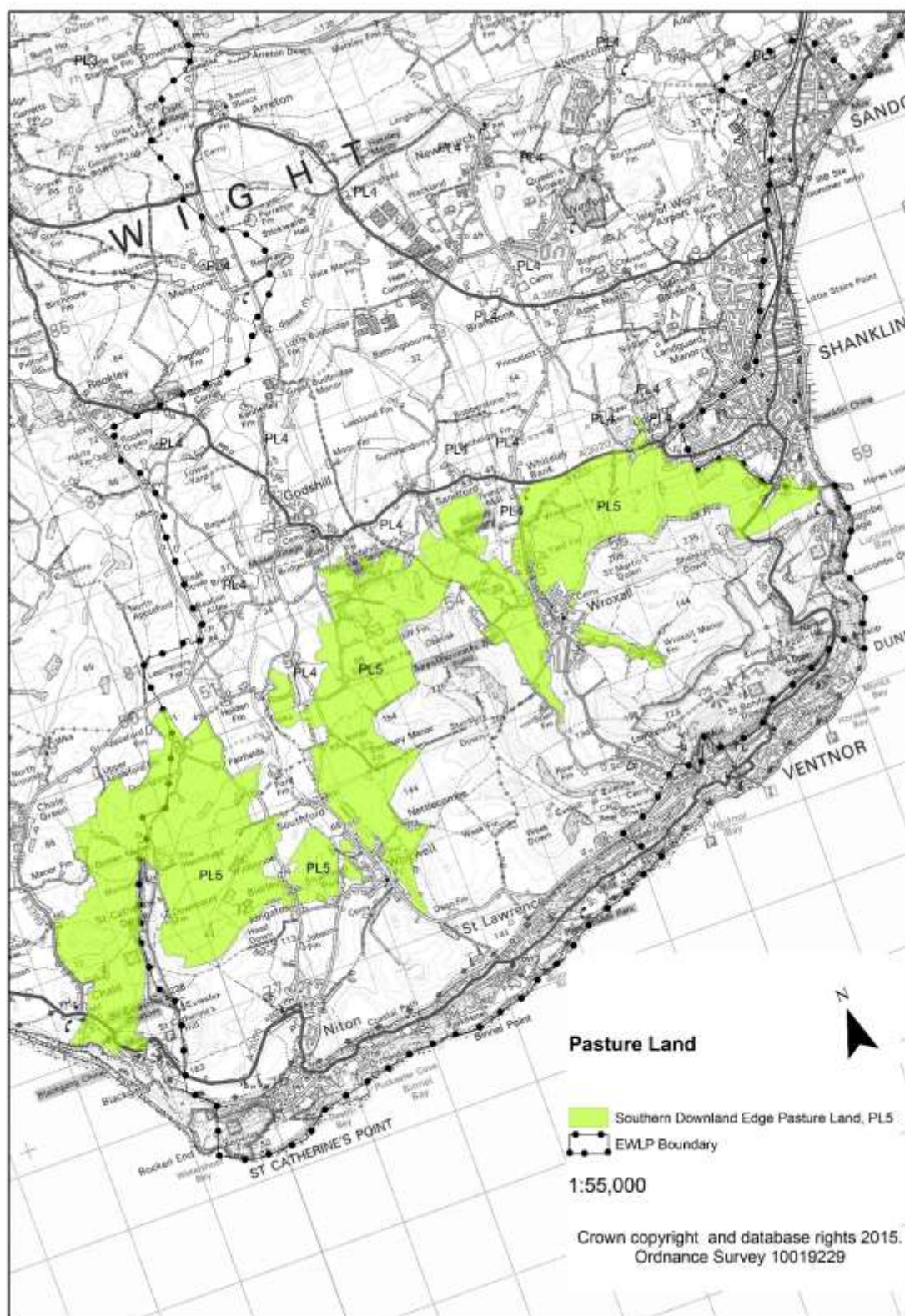
## **Landscape Guidelines**

- Conserve and enhance the hedgerows in this character area through appropriate management
- Conserve ancient woodland areas
- Work with owners using fields to keep horses to encourage sensitive approaches to pasture management, hedgerow maintenance and the siting and maintenance of structures and other paraphernalia
- Conserve and enhance the historic environmental features which contribute to the character of this area such as its listed buildings
- Retain and maintain access via the public rights of way network
- Conserve and enhance the grassland, woodland and wetland areas for nature conservation benefit





## CHARACTER AREA PL5: SOUTHERN DOWNLAND EDGE PASTURE LAND



## Location and description

Located in the south of the East Wight, north of the southern chalk downland and south of the urban area of Shanklin and settlements of Whiteley Bank, Sandford and Roud extending from Chale in the west to Shanklin and Luccombe in the east. In the civil parishes of Chale, Niton and Whitwell, Godshill, Wroxall, Newchurch and Shanklin.

This pastoral landscape lies on the steep slopes below the base of the southern downland including the sides of the various combes in the area. Rolling and irregular fields with mature hedgerows, numerous copses (including ancient woodlands) and dispersed farmsteads, rural cottages grand houses and designed landscapes, are features of this area.

Underlying geology consists of Upper Greensand, Carstone, Sandrock Formation, Gault and Ferruginous Sands overlain in parts by River Terrace gravels and Alluvium. Elevation ranges from 50 metres to 150 metres above Ordnance Datum.

Around 80% of this character area is within the Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The settlements of Whitwell, Wroxall, Luccombe and Shanklin are located on the edge of this area. Within the area there are many dispersed farmsteads. Listed Buildings include: Barn at Downcourt Farm Grade II; Old House Wydcombe Manor Grade II; Gatepiers to Wydcombe Grade II; Lodge to Wydcombe Manor Grade II; Stable block to the Hermitage Grade II; Moorhills Grade II; Barn south east of Moorhills Grade II; Stenbury Manor Grade II; Row of six former pigsties to the east of Stenbury Manor Grade II; Barn at Stenbury Grade II; Former barn at Stenbury now store Grade II; Barn at Stenbury Grade II; Wroxall Farm Barn Grade II; Sibbeck Grade II; Sibbecks Farm Barn Grade II; Wroxall Cross Farmhouse Grade II; Moncrieff Farm Grade II; Little Stenbury Grade II; Stable and hayloft at Fairfield's Grade II; Barn at Fairfield's Grade II; Appuldurcombe Grade I; Sheepwash Farmhouse Grade II; Stables to Appuldurcombe Grade II; Wall north west of Appuldurcombe House Grade II; wall to north east of Appuldurcombe Grade II; Lodge to Appuldurcombe Grade II; Lodge to Appuldurcombe Grade II; Wall and entrance at Appuldurcombe Grade II; Cart shed to west of Yard Farmhouse Grade II; Yar Farmhouse Grade II; Freemantle Lodge gateway to Appuldurcombe Grade II\*; Freemantle Lodge Grade II; Barn at Sainham Farm Grade II; Cliff Thatch Grade II; Barn south east of Cliff Thatch Grade II; Former stable to Cliff Thatch Grade II.

Appuldurcombe House is a scheduled monument as is the medieval settlement and moated site at Stenbury Manor.

Appuldurcombe is also on the national Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England, as a Lancelot 'Capability' Brown designed landscape the only one on the Isle of Wight.

The designed landscape at Wydcombe and the gardens at the Hermitage are on the Local List.

The Historic Landscape Characterisation tells us that the field pattern in the area is a result of enclosed waste, common and green areas dating from the medieval and post medieval period, enclosed pastures and meadows dating from the medieval period, a small area of enclosed open field/open field furlongs dating from the post medieval period, enclosed parkland at Appuldurcombe dating from the C20th and at Wycombe from the C19th, some areas of amalgamated fields C19th and C20th. The character area falls within the South Wight Sandstone and Gravel and South Wight Downland Edge Historic Landscape Character Areas and within the medieval parishes of Chale, Newchurch, Shanklin, Whitwell, Godshell, Niton and Brading.

A small part of the Shanklin Conservation area falls within this character area.

Various small copses throughout the area are ancient woodlands including: Gotten Copse; The Rew; Upper Dolcoppice Wood; Hungerberry Copse; Beech Copse; Sim's Copse; Strathwell Copse; Kingates Copse; Greatwood Copse; Sainham Copse; Park Withybed; and Horsecroft Copse. Additional woodland has been planted close to Sainham and Beech Copse, close to Blackgang in the far south west, and close to Southford.

Parts of the area are of national nature conservation interest and value. These include the edge of Greatwood Copse in the east and part of the Compton Chine to Steephill Cove Site of Special Scientific Interest in the southwest close to Blackgang. There are many more locally important areas designated as Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation including: Head Down (heathland); Gore Down; Wydcombe Estate; Upper Dolcoppice Woods; Gotten Copse; Hungerberry Copse; Bottom's Copse; Appuldurcombe Park; Beech Copse; Sainham Copse; Appuldurcombe Down; St Catherine's Down. Parts of the Southern Uplands, Eastern Yar Valley and South West Coast Biodiversity Opportunity Areas.

Around 75% of the area is benefitting from Environmental Stewardship within the entry level, entry level with higher level and organic entry level with higher level schemes.

There are many public rights of way providing access throughout this character area including a number of promoted routes (Stenbury Trail, Worsley Trail).

## Key Characteristics

- Sloping, rolling pastoral landscape
- Hedgerows, hedgerow trees and copses
- Ancient woodland
- Historic farmsteads dispersed through the area
- The C18th landscape at Appuldurcombe Park designed by Lancelot 'Capability' Brown
- The designed landscapes at Wydcombe and the Hermitage

## Past forces for change

- Investment through Environmental Stewardship
- Scrub and secondary woodland growth on ungrazed areas

## Future forces for change

- Continued investment through Environmental Stewardship
- Continued scrub and secondary woodland growth if unchecked

## Condition and Character

The overall condition of the features of this character area is judged to be **good** and the character of the area is judged to be **strong**.

## Sensitivities

- Hedgerows, hedgerow trees, copses and ancient woodlands
- Nature conservation value of woodlands and grasslands
- Historic buildings (particularly farmsteads, Manors and grand houses such as Appuldurcombe)
- Designed landscapes at Appuldurcombe, Wydcombe and the Hermitage
- Scheduled monuments including Appuldurcombe and the medieval and moated site at Stenbury
- Pastoral character of this rolling sloped enclosed landscape

## Landscape Strategy

Conserve and enhance the inherent qualities and features of this landscape character area. These include its designed landscapes, historic buildings and scheduled monuments, hedgerows, hedgerow trees, ancient woodland and other copses, grassland areas and nature conservation interest and value.

## Landscape Guidelines

- Conserve and enhance the hedgerows and hedgerow trees in this character area through appropriate management
- Conserve ancient woodland areas

- Conserve and enhance the historic environmental features which contribute to the character of this area such as its listed buildings, scheduled monuments and designed landscapes
- Conserve and enhance the grassland areas for their landscape and nature conservation interest.





## LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE: SANDSTONE HILLS



View towards Knighton East Wood with Knighton West Wood in the mid distance to right.



View towards Knighton East Wood from Knighton.



Heathland on Bleak Down looking south towards Whitwell with St Catherine's Hill in the distance on the right.



Bleak Down looking northwest across grazed area.

This character type is located in two parts of the East Wight. The first is above the hamlet of Knighton north of Newchurch and extends from Mersley in the west to Kern in the east, parallel to the central chalk downland. The second is a narrow ridge in the very east of the East Wight running north to south between Rookley to Roud.

Distinct areas of higher ground with heathland or ancient woodland cover on hill tops and pasture grassland fields on slopes. The underlying geology of these areas is sandstone including Upper Greensand, Carstone, Sandrock Formation and Ferruginous Sands with drift deposits of River Terrace gravels and some small areas of Alluvium in valleys.

The Historic Landscape Characterisation tells us that enclosure of land took place as early as the medieval period and through to the C19th and C20th. This included former heathland, parkland (at Knighton), common, waste or green and a small area of former open field (near Rookley). A largely unsettled area with the exception of the historic hamlet of Knighton.

On the higher sandstone hills near Knighton woodland is a major feature of the landscape with a number of ancient woodland sites. At Bleak Down the Sandstone Hill is more open in character with an area of important heathland.

### **Key Characteristics**

- Distinct ridges either backed by the chalk downland or surrounded by rolling pastureland and arable areas
- Acid environments on a sandstone geology important for ancient woodland, grassland and heathland
- Open views to the surrounding landscape
- Dispersed farmsteads and sparse settlement (with the exception of the hamlet of Knighton)



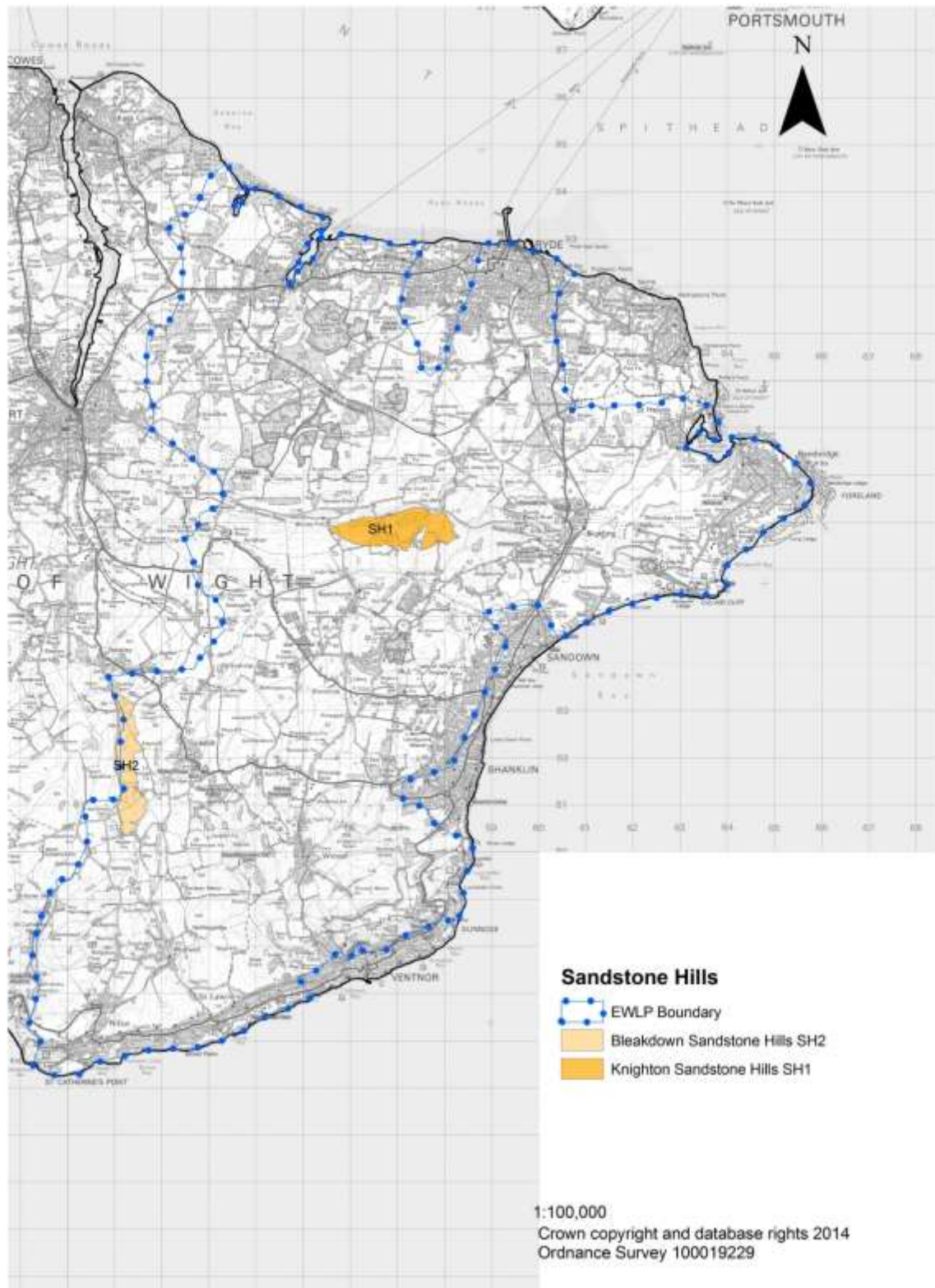
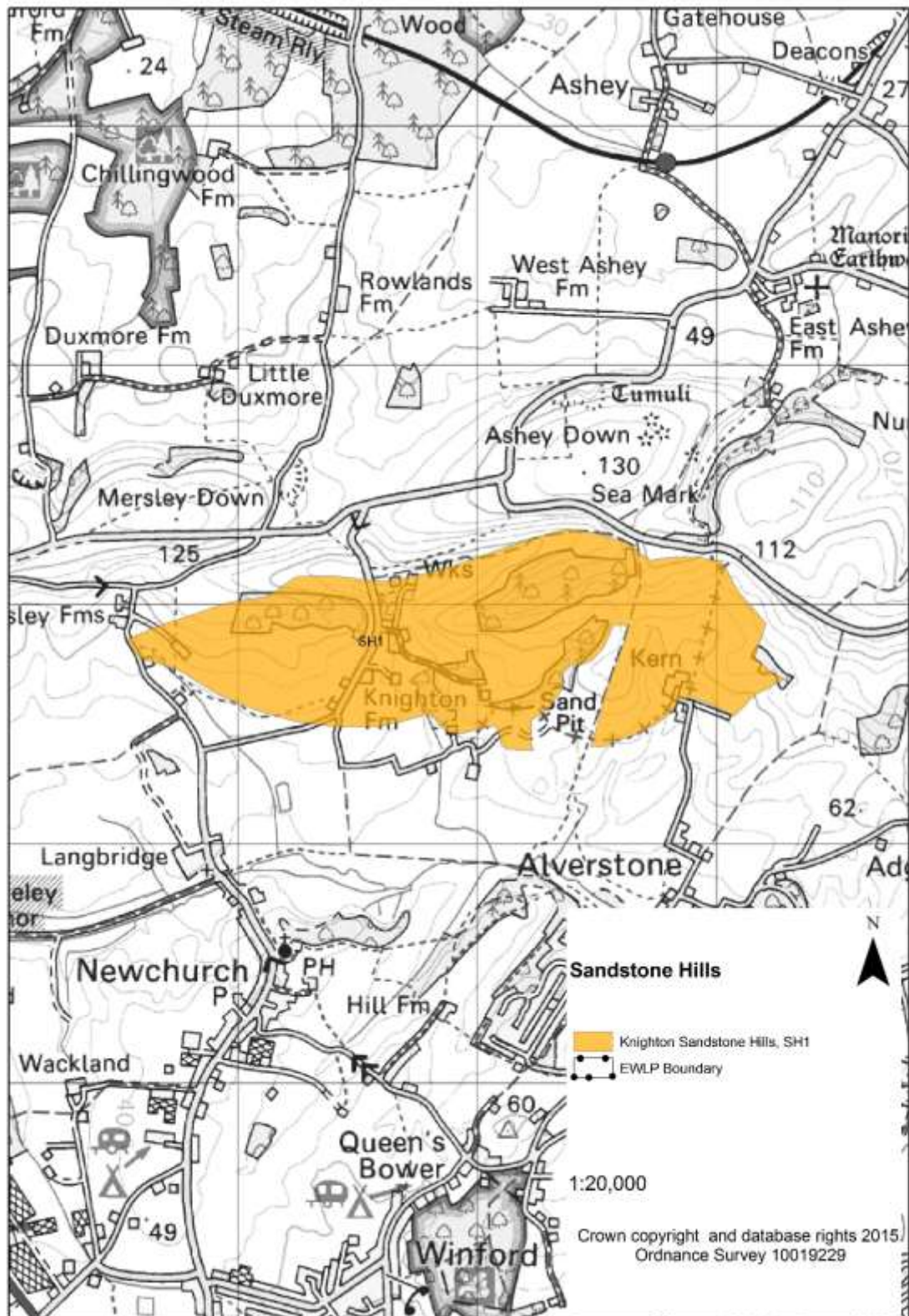


Figure 34: Sandstone Hills Landscape Character Areas

## CHARACTER AREA SH1: KNIGHTON SANDSTONE HILLS





## Location and description

This area of sandstone hills is located south of the central chalk ridge above the hamlet of Knighton extending from Mersley in the west to Kern in the east and falls in the civil parish of Newchurch. Underlying geology includes Upper Greensand, Carstone, Sandrock Formation, Gault and Ferruginous Sands with drift areas of Alluvium at the base of the slope. Elevation ranges from 10 metres to 40 metres above Ordnance datum. Knighton Shute connects the area with the adjacent Downs Road and follows the line of a valley between the two wooded hills. The settlement of Knighton is nestled in the valley.

Land cover includes woodland at Knighton East Wood and Knighton West Wood and various smaller copses, pasture land with some small areas of arable cultivated areas on southern facing slopes in the east of the area.

The area is entirely within the Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

A number of listed buildings are found here including: Griggshole Grade II; Barn at Griggs Farm Grade II; Knighton Farm Cottage Grade II; Knighton Farmhouse Grade II; Kern Grade II; Barn at Knighton approximately 40 metres east of farmhouse Grade II.

Knighton Gorges was a C12th manor house which was demolished in 1821 by George Maurice Bissett to prevent it being inherited by his daughter. Remaining listed structures associated with it are: Garden alcove situated within bowling green enclosure at Knighton Grade II; Wall surrounding former bowling green at Knighton Gorges Grade II; Gate piers at Knighton Waterworks Grade II. The Knighton Manor Walled Garden is on the Local List.

The Historic Landscape Characterisation tells us that the field pattern today is a result of the enclosure of heathland and enclosed downland in the medieval and post medieval periods; enclosure of parkland from the former Knighton Gorges in the C19th and amalgamation, reorganisation and sub division of fields during the C19th and C20th. The character area falls within the Newchurch Environs and Sandown Bay Historic Landscape Character Area and the medieval parishes of Newchurch and Brading.

There are large areas of woodland on the sandstone hills ridges in this character area these include ancient woodland at Knighton East Wood and Knighton West Wood (both also Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation); Backerwoods Copse; and Six Acre Copse. A small area of new planting has taken place within the area.

Kern Chalk Pit the edge of which is in this area and Knighton Down are both Sites of Interest For Nature Conservation for their grassland interest. Part of the area falls within the Eastern Central Ridge Biodiversity Opportunity Area.

Around 40% of the area is benefitting from Environmental Stewardship at entry level and entry level with higher level.

A small area of Open Access land is found close to Knighton East Wood falling mostly in the neighbouring Chalk Downs Character Type. A number of public rights of way cross this character area including hollow ways giving access from the adjacent downland through the area and onwards to the valley floor in the south. The Bembridge Trail passes through the area from Kern to Mersley.

### **Key Characteristics**

- Wooded hill tops and steep slopes
- Pasture grassland and some areas of arable cultivation on lower slopes
- Hedgerows are a feature of enclosure of fields on the southern slopes with the northern slope being more open
- Settlement in the area is located in the valley at the hamlet of Knighton including a number of historic buildings
- Evidence of the former historic manor of Knighton Gorges

### **Past forces for change**

- Plantation woodland on ancient woodland sites at Knighton West Wood and Knighton East Wood
- Further tree planting close to Mersley in the west
- Loss of parkland at Knighton Gorges
- Environmental Stewardship funding for landscape, nature conservation and historic environmental benefits
- Erosion of verges on rural lanes potentially leading to pressure for road widening as surfaces are made good

### **Future forces for change**

- Climate change impacts
- Benefits of continued Environmental Stewardship schemes
- Potential impact from adjacent Knighton Sandpit quarry site which has recently been extended (see Changed Countryside)

### **Condition and Character**

The overall condition of the features of this character area is judged to be **good** and the overall character of the area is judged to be **strong**.

## **Sensitivities**

- Ancient woodland sites
- Historic buildings and sites including farmsteads and remaining structures associated with the lost manor of Knighton Gorges
- Hollow ways and rural roads

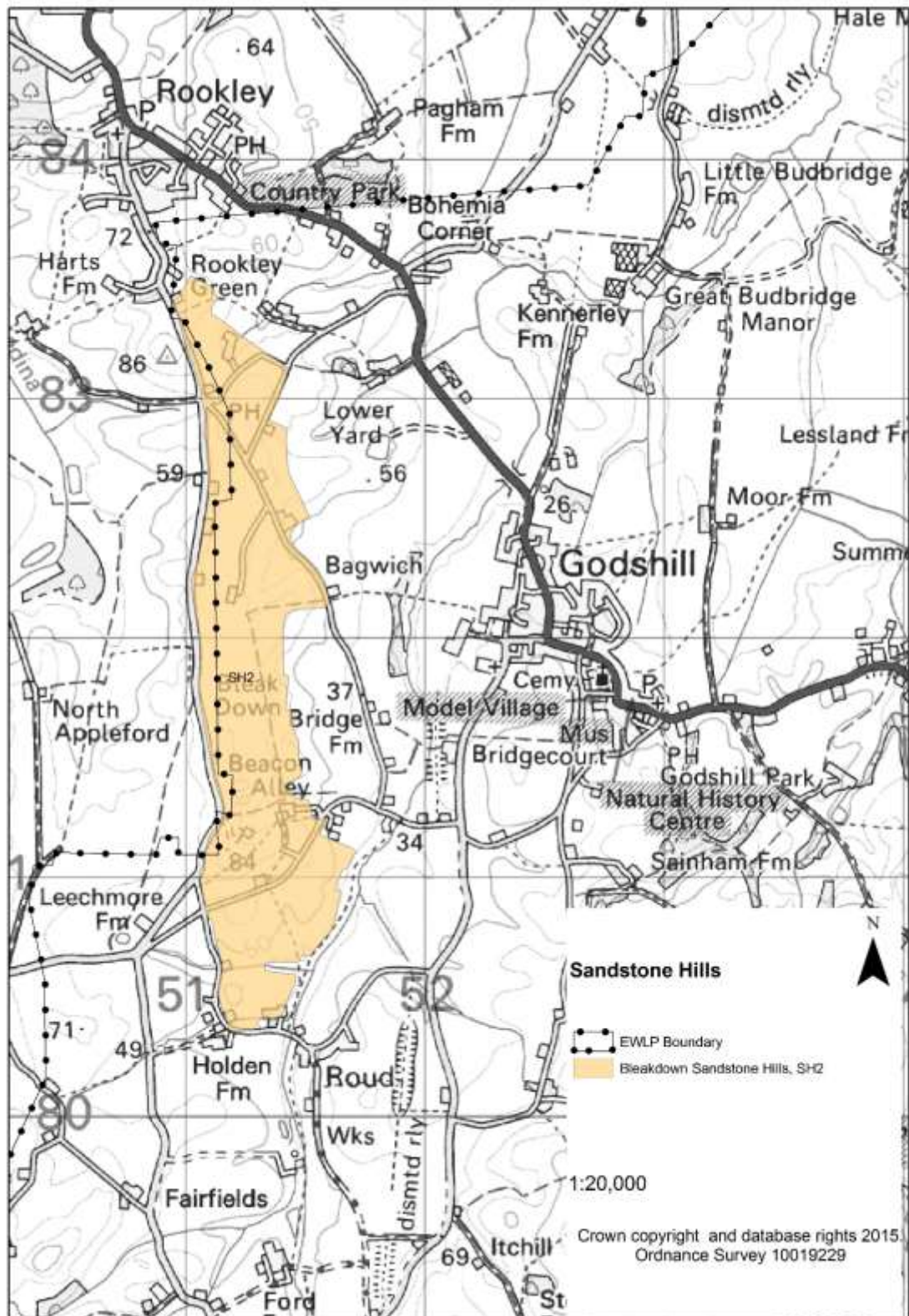
## **Landscape Strategy**

Conserve and where possible enhance the character and inherent qualities of this character area. These include the historic buildings and structures in the area, ancient woodland, hedgerows, grasslands, hollow ways, rural road network, and other features which have received investment through Environmental Stewardship.

## **Landscape Guidelines**

- Conserve the woodland interest of the area, particularly ancient woodland
- Monitor changes in the character of the rural road network especially verge damage and incremental widening
- Conserve historic buildings and their setting

## CHARACTER AREA SH2: BLEAK DOWN SANDSTONE HILLS



## Location and description

An area of sandstone hills running as a ridge from north to south in the very east of the East Wight Area. Extending from the south of the village of Rookley to Roud Lane in the south and from Niton Road and Bleak Down in the west to the bottom of the eastern slope of the hill close to Bagwich. The area falls within the Godshill and Rookley civil parishes.

A large area of Bleak Down was a site of quarrying and later landfill. An important paleolithic site was located during gravel extraction in the early C20th. Landfill areas have since been restored including the recreation of heathland areas. One pit area remains, it contains a number of sheds and used for the storage of containers and vehicles, it is well hidden from views due to surrounding vegetation and being below the level of the surrounding landscape. Hedgerows and hedgerow trees are a feature of this area off of the ridge of the hill especially on the eastern facing slopes. Significant areas of rough ground and heathland on the hill tops with grazed pasture on the lower slopes.

Underlying geology includes Carstone, Sandrock Formation and Ferruginous Sands and there are areas of Alluvium and River Terrace drift deposits. Elevation ranges from 40 metres to 80 metres above Ordnance Datum.

Largely unsettled with the exception of a number of rural cottages on the edge of the area a large equestrian centre and the Chequers Inn in the north of the area.

There are two listed buildings in the area: Cherry Thatch Grade II; The Chequers Inn Grade II.

The Historic Landscape Characterisation indicates that field patterns reflect the enclosure of open field strips (in the north of the area) in the medieval period; enclosed waste, common or green in the post medieval era; enclosure of heathland in the C19th and C20th and the amalgamation of fields to create larger areas in the C20th. Only one small area of original heathland is shown although large areas of heathland restoration have taken place post landfill. The area falls within Godshill medieval parish and the South Wight Sandstone and Gravel Historic Landscape Character Area.

The eastern side of the area is partly within the Eastern Yar Valley Biodiversity Opportunity Area indicating its potential for wetland habitat objectives. The heathland at Bleak Down is a Site of Interest for Nature Conservation.

Around 15% of the area is benefitting from Environmental Stewardship at entry level and higher level including some in the organic scheme.

A number of public rights of way cross the area and the small area of heathland on Bleak Down is an Open Access area.

## Key Characteristics

- Original and restored heathland areas
- Views to adjacent areas from this distinct north south ridge
- Grazed pasture on the eastern slopes of the area
- Hedgerows and hedgerow trees are found in the south and east of the area off of the main hill top

## Past forces for change

- Use of the area for mineral extraction
- Use of the area for landfill
- Heathland restoration
- Environmental Stewardship funding for landscape, nature conservation and historic environmental benefits

## Future forces for change

- Climate change
- Management of scrub to maximise heathland habitats
- Changes to European Agricultural Funds for Rural Development and European funded farm subsidies on pasture management
- Benefits from continued investment through Environmental Stewardship schemes

## Condition and Character

The overall condition of the features of this character area is judged to be **good** and the character of the area is judged to be **good**.

## Sensitivities

- Heathland
- Open views to and from the area
- Hedgerows and hedgerow trees

## Landscape Strategy

- Conserve and where possible enhance the character and inherent qualities of this character area. These include heathland, hedgerows and hedgerow trees, and the open aspect of the hill tops and other features which have received investment through Environmental Stewardship.

## Landscape Guidelines

- Conserve, enhance and look for opportunities to recreate heathland
- Conserve hedgerows and hedgerow trees
- Retain open views to and from the area





## LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE: THE UNDERCLIFF



Path in the Landslip near Bonchurch.



View into the Undercliff west of St Catherines taken from the Coastal Path.



Undercliff Drive.

Castlehaven looking into  
Reeth Bay.



Binnel Bay with view of St  
Catherine's Lighthouse in  
the distance.



This character type is located along the very southern coastline of the East Wight area. It extends from below Chale Terrace in the south west to the end of Shanklin in the south east.

It is the largest inhabited rotational landslide complex in Western Europe, although for the purposes of this assessment the developed areas are classified as settlement and urban areas falling outside of this character type.

Sitting below the chalk downs and including the dramatic inland Upper Greensand cliff, these landslip areas include dense woodland, scrub, rough ground, grasslands on flatter ground close to the coast, adjacent settlement areas such as St Catherine's, St Lawrence, Ventnor and Bonchurch.

The dramatic landform of this area is due to the action of coastal erosion and the land slide complex caused by groundwater percolating through the Upper Greensand lubricating the Gault clay layer which then becomes wet and creates slip planes with the heavier rock falling as a rotational landslide. This creates a series of terraced landslips often with graben valleys in between historic land movement.

Appreciated for its natural beauty the area was a draw for those wishing to appreciate the picturesque in the late C18th and early C19th. This resulted in its increased popularity as a location for Marine Villas and Cottages Ornés built by the wealthy as summer or permanent residences by the sea. Many of these properties created surrounding parkland and ornamental gardens as part of their setting. The area increased in popularity in the C19th and C20th leading to the expansion of smaller settlements and the development of Ventnor as a seaside resort town. Stone walls are often used as a means of enclosure in the area such as between fields on the coastal grasslands and alongside the Undercliff Drive. Other areas are more wooded in character.

Threats to road access and footpaths by land movement is an ongoing concern. Managing a balanced approach to allowing the continuation of dynamic coastal processes and landslip whilst also protecting access and property will continue to be a challenge.

### **Key Characteristics**

- A dramatic landscape of high nature conservation and historic environmental interest
- Tranquil area in some woodland areas secretive and in some areas more open and expansive with panoramic coastal and sea views
- Open access and public footpaths allow opportunities to appreciate the character type and views from the top of the inland cliff into the Undercliff are often breathtaking. However some areas within the character type have lost former paths and road access due to land movement

- Parts of the Undercliff have been strongly influenced by designed parklands and ornamental gardens taking advantage of their coastal location, micro climate being south facing and sheltered from northerly winds by the inland cliff



Close to Woody Bay with Sugar Loaf on the left and looking west towards Old Park.



Terracing of historic landslips close to Rocken End.

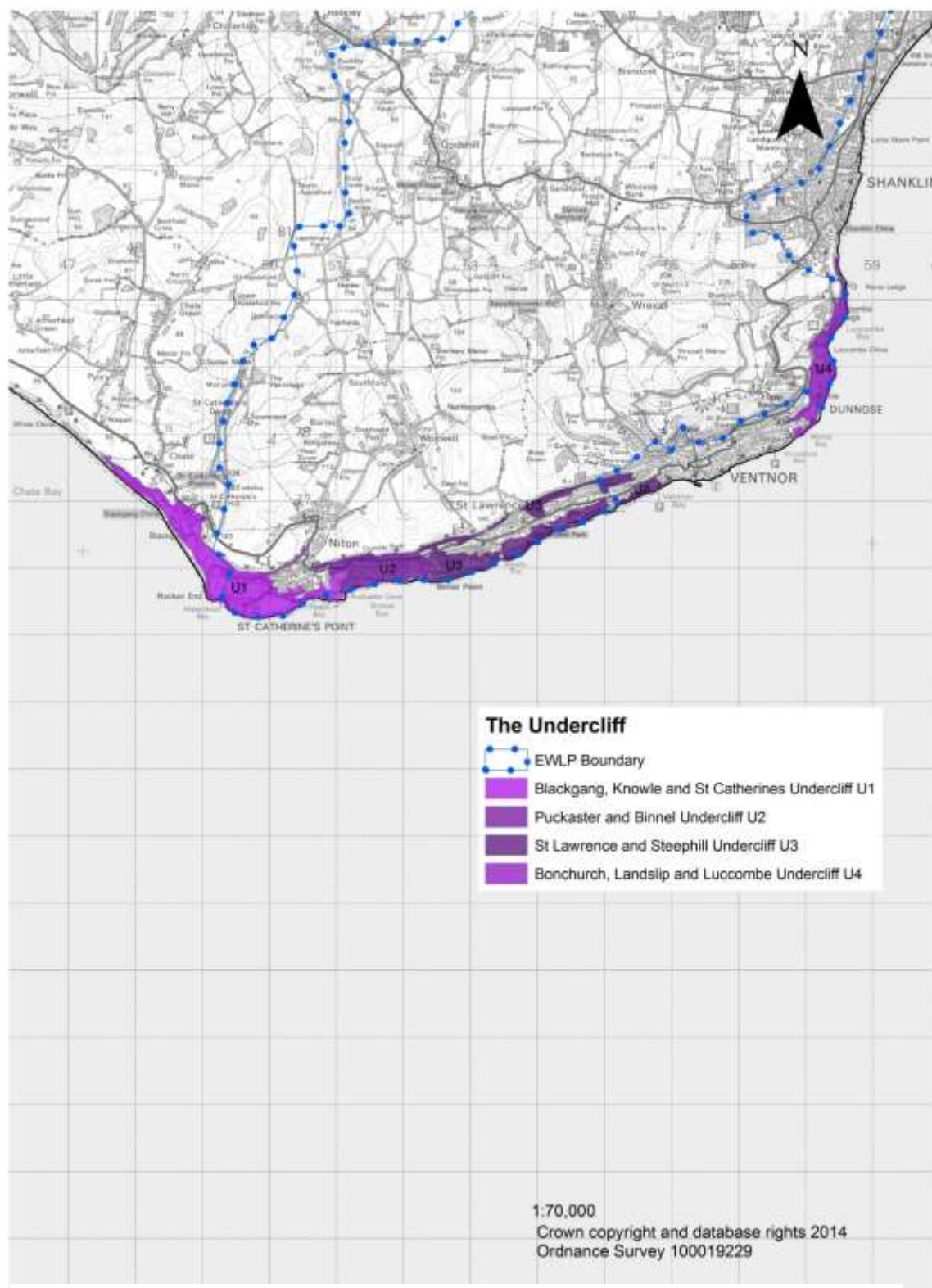
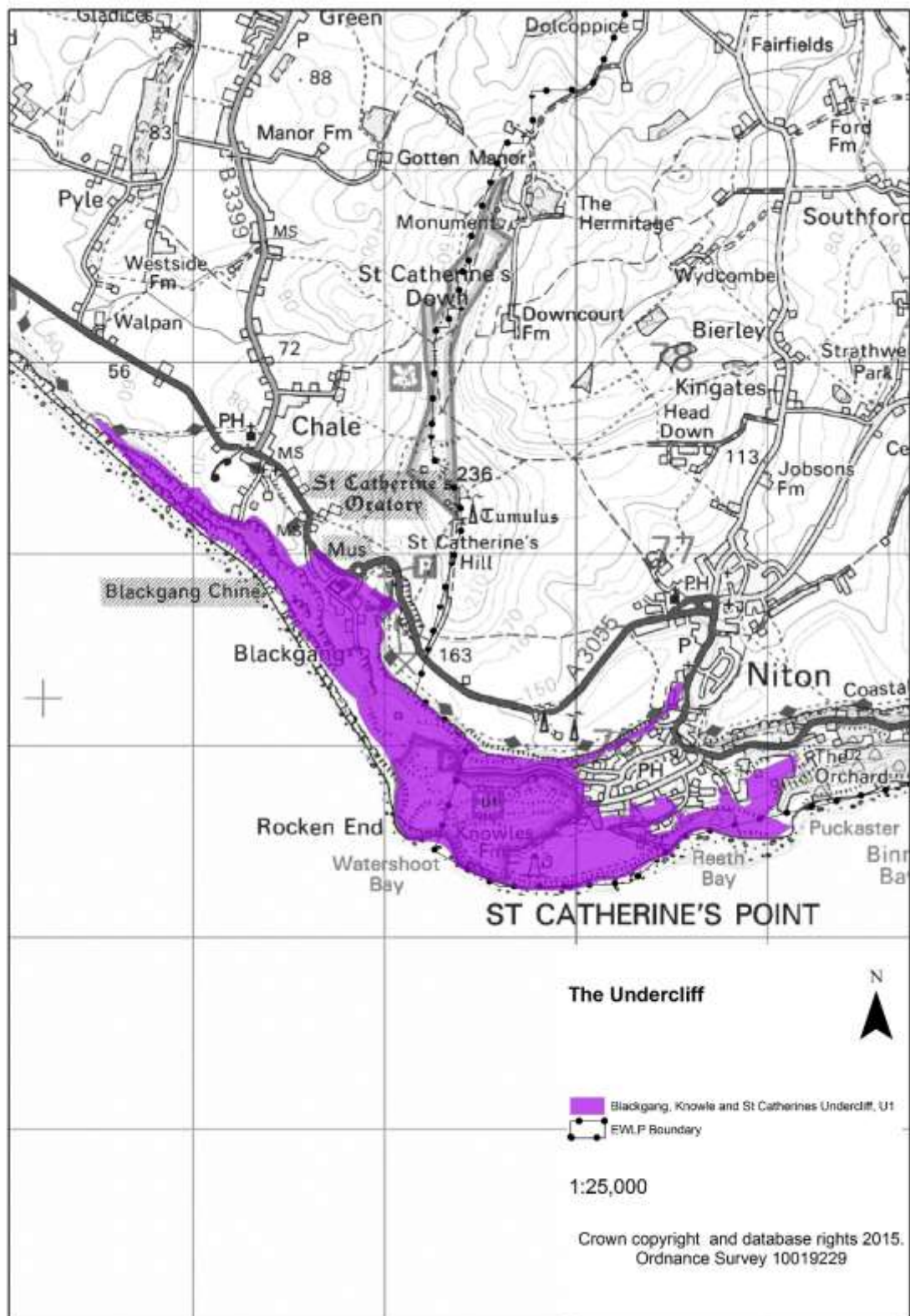


Figure 35: The Undercliff Landscape Character Areas





## CHARACTER AREA U1: BLACKGANG, KNOWLES AND ST CATHERINE'S UNDERCLIFF



## Location and description

Located in the very south and west of the East Wight this character type extends from below Chale Terrace in the west to just east of Puckaster Lane near St Catherine's in the east and from the seashore northwards to the inland cliff. The area falls within the civil parishes of Chale and Niton & Whitwell.

Underlying geology includes Lower Chalk, Upper Greensand, Carstone, Sandrock Formation, Gault, Ferruginous Sands overlain with some small deposits of Alluvium and Blown Sand. Elevation ranges from sea level to 160 metres above Ordnance Datum at the top of the inland cliff face.

A landscape of dramatic terraced landslips with valleys between parallel historic falls, areas of exposed rock and occasionally individual fallen rocks. An area of continued active land movement with areas of natural vegetation regeneration in the west and secondary woodland below the inland cliff and in some graben valleys and characteristic stone wall enclosed pasture land south of the village of St Catherine's.

The Old Blackgang Road runs below the inland cliff and once continued westwards to the village of Chale. Partially lost in the early C20th the route was completely severed to vehicles and pedestrians in the 1980s. A car park was created on part of the old road and is popular with those wishing to access the surrounding area and the beach at Rocken End.

Natural springs are found at the base of the inland cliff flowing south towards the coast and running water can often be heard if not seen due to woodland and scrub growth.

St Catherine's Lighthouse and its associated outbuildings are dominant built features in an otherwise largely unsettled and exposed landscape. A small tourism caravan park at Castlehaven and Knowles Farm being other notable built features.

St Catherine's Lighthouse is Grade II listed, the Lighthouse Keeper's Quarters is Grade II listed. Two Grade II listed stone built gatepiers mark the entrance to the site originally planned as the location for Windcliffe. This grand house was eventually built higher up the hill leaving the gatepiers marking an empty field.

Beach Cottage at Castlehaven is on the Local List described as a relatively untouched attractive rubble cottage with brick quoins.

The settlement of St Catherine's lies to the north of the area, it increased in size during the C19th and C20th due to the popularity of the area and its chalybeate spring which was in the landslip area to the west (now lost). This included Sandrock Hotel (now lost) and the Victoria Hotel at Castlehaven (now lost).

The area is fully within the Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The Historic Landscape Characterisation tells us that the area is largely composed of rough ground, coastal slope, scrub and landslip areas with some small areas of enclosed pasture and meadows and reorganised field patterns from the C19th close to Knowles Farm and St Catherine's lighthouse. The character area falls within the Atherfield Coastal Plain and The Undercliff Historic Landscape Character Areas and medieval parishes of Chale and Niton.

A significant part of the area is within the ownership of the National Trust and is managed as through extensive grazing. Around 40% of the area is benefitting from Environmental Stewardship within the entry level and entry/higher level schemes.

Secondary woodland is a feature of the area particularly immediately below the inland cliff. Additional woodland planting has taken place in a small area near Chale Terrace in the west and around Puckaster Farm in the east.

There are a number of public rights of way connecting the area with St Catherine's village and also up the side of the inland cliff to the cliff top. A large part of the area close to Rocken End is open access land. In the east of the area Castlehaven is a popular location for surfers and the coastal defence works have created a sandy beach area at low tide by holding back the slumping cliffs. The cliffs in this area are particularly treacherous due to the Gault clay and former public paths have been lost to coastal erosion with alternative routes not possible at this time.

This character area has great nature conservation importance. Much of it falls within the South Wight Maritime Special Area of Conservation international recognition of its coastal habitats including its vegetated cliffs and this area also falls within the nationally important Compton Chine to Steephill Cove Site of Special Scientific Interest. The area also partially falls within the South West Coast Biodiversity Opportunity Area.

### **Key Characteristics**

- Dramatic landslip area of historic terraces and graben valleys
- Open areas closer to the coast and on the top of terraces provide panoramic views across the landslip area, to the dramatic exposed inland cliff and out to the English Channel
- Stone walls are commonly used as a means of enclosure and demarcation of boundaries such as alongside roads, within pasture fields and between properties
- An area of high landscape and nature conservation value reflected in the level of international and national designation
- Tranquil area with backed by the small Victorian settlement of St Catherine's
- St Catherine's Lighthouse is a dominant landmark visible in most views of the area, and from the top of the inland cliff giving the area a strong maritime character

- Large parts of the area are open access and a number of linear public rights of way and informal paths also provide opportunities to enjoy the area

### **Past forces for change**

- Coastal erosion has led to the loss of footpaths on the cliff tops and coastal slopes
- Continued landslip movement has damaged the road network in the area leading to the severance of the Old Blackgang Road and damage to the road access to St Catherine's lighthouse and Knowles Farm
- Historic landslips creating a mosaic of habitats and conditions including wet areas in valley floors and where springs rise at the base of the inland cliff, open species rich grassland, scrub, secondary woodland, exposed rock and stone in stone walls, and eroding cliffs and slopes. This creates a geologically complex area of high biodiversity and landscape value
- Environmental Stewardship investment in conservation of the natural environment and historic features in the area
- Open access
- Coastal protection at Castlehaven

### **Future forces for change**

- Further coastal erosion and landslips
- Potential loss of access to some areas through loss of paths or roads
- Continued benefits from Environmental Stewardship investment
- Possible offshore tidal energy research and development

### **Condition and Character**

The overall condition of the features of this area is judged to be **good** and the character of the area is judged to be **strong**.

### **Sensitivities**

- Stone walls as a means of enclosure
- Nature conservation and geomorphology value of the area
- Importance of continued natural process of coastal erosion and landslip for its nature conservation and landscape importance
- Tranquillity
- The west of the area has an undeveloped and 'wild' character
- Open coastal views
- Historic sites and buildings

### **Landscape Strategy**

- Conserve the character and inherent qualities of this character area. These include neutral grasslands, vegetated maritime cliffs and slopes, stone walls,

open aspect on coastal grasslands, panoramic landslip and sea views and tranquillity.

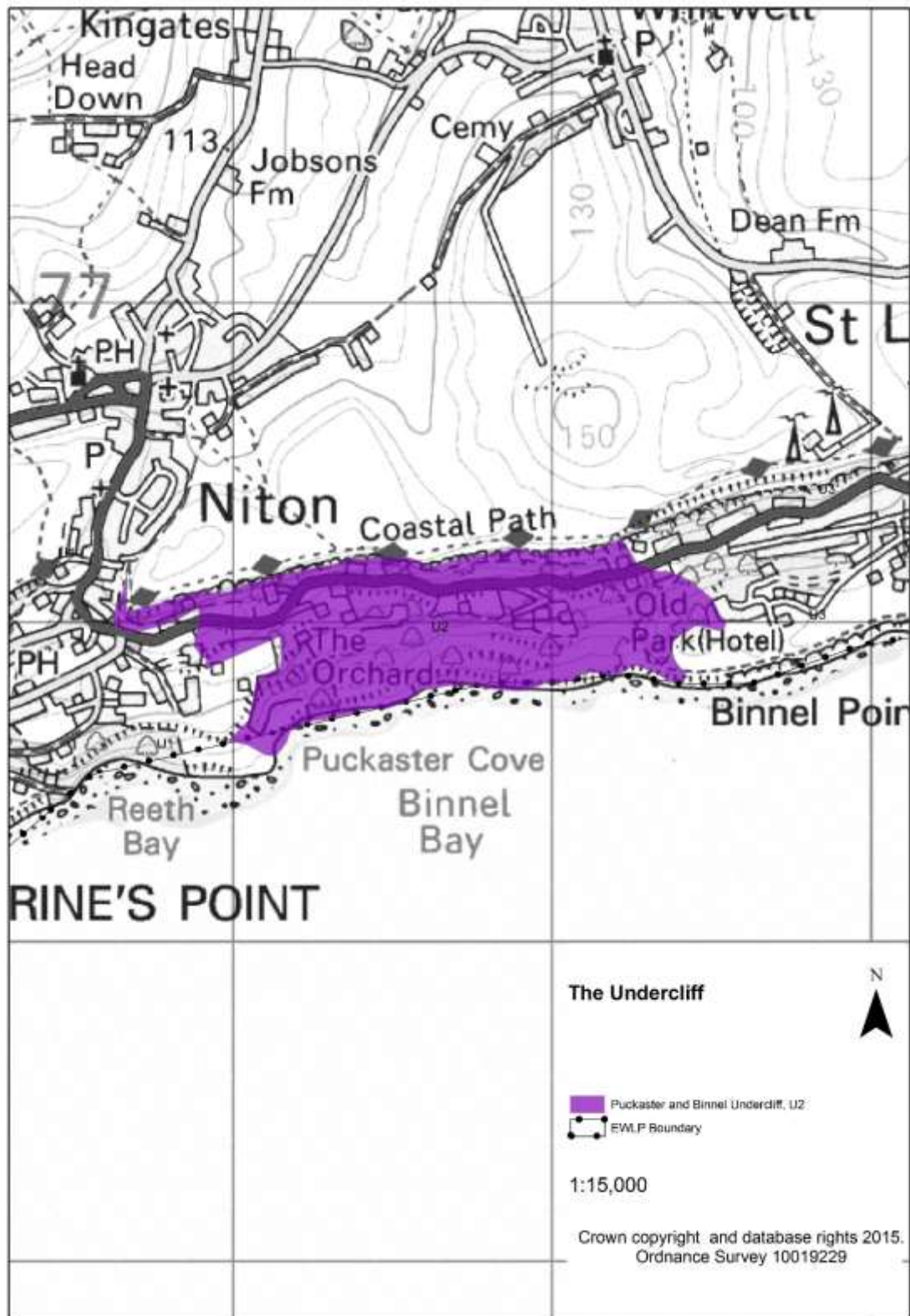
### **Landscape Guidelines**

- Conserve and repair stone walls used as enclosure and demarcation of boundaries
- Seek to retain public access in an area subject to land movement where safe to do so
- Promote the geological and nature conservation interest of the area and conserve and where possible enhance those features and habitats of key importance
- Retain the area's tranquil character, openness and panoramic coastal and landscape views





## CHARACTER AREA U2: PUCKASTER AND BINNEL UNDERCLIFF



## Location and description

This character area is located just east of Puckaster Lane in the west to just west of Old Park in the east of the Undercliff, and from the shoreline to the inland cliff. The area falls within the civil parishes of Ventnor and Niton & Whitwell.

Underlying geology includes the Upper Greensand of the inland cliff, Carstone, Sandrock Formation and Gault. An area of active land movement due to the geological conditions, with terraces and historic vegetated landslip areas.

The area includes extensive coastal scrub on the coastal slope and is well wooded with secondary woodland further inland and either side of the Undercliff Drive which runs just south and parallel to the inland cliff. Elevation ranges from sea level to 120 metres above Ordnance Datum.

The picturesque character, tranquillity, climate and coastal views made this area popular in the C18th and C19th and led to the development of a number of grand marine villas and cottages ornés with their landscaped gardens and parklands being built in the area by the social elite. Other than these properties the area is largely unsettled with exception of Undercliff Glen Caravan Park which is just in the area in the north east. Stone walls are a feature of the area and in particular as a means of demarcating the edges of the Undercliff Drive.

Listed buildings and structures include: Mirables Grade II; Orchard Close, Orchard Dene and The Orchard Grade II; Gatepiers at the Orchard Grade II. Part of the parkland of Old Park is located in the very east of this area and is on the Local List.

The whole area falls within the Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The Historic Landscape Characterisation tells us that much of the area is scrub and secondary woodland with small areas of open unimproved land on coastal slopes. Within these areas there are a number of small designed gardens associated with Marine Villas, grand houses built to take advantage of the area. These include the gardens at Mirables dating from the C18th, the gardens at The Orchard dating from the C19th, the gardens and site of the former Beauchamp House dating from the C19th (now lost due to land movement and demolition in the early 2000s), and part of the landscaped park and gardens at Old Park dating from the C19th. The ruins of the harbour built at Binnel Bay by William Spindler in the late C19th then owner of the Old Park estate are located in this area. This character area falls within The Undercliff Historic Landscape Character Area and the medieval parishes of Whitwell and Niton.

Important for its nature conservation interest and in particular the actively eroding coastline, vegetated coastal slope and its geomorphology and a large part of the area is designated as part of the Compton Chine to Steephill Cove Site of Special Scientific Interest.

A small part of the area (around 15%) is benefitting for Environmental Stewardship.

Public access in this area is more limited. The Undercliff Drive (A3055) passes through this area and a recent landslip just east of the area close to Undercliff Glen Caravan Park has closed this route to traffic since early 2014 when the road failed. A number of footpaths used to connect Undercliff Drive to the coast and a route used to run along the coastline to Castlehaven all these routes have been lost to land movement. The Cripple Path is a dramatic route which connecting with the Undercliff Drive and climbing up the inland cliff to the Coastal Path which runs along the cliff top and onwards to the village of Niton.

### **Key Characteristics**

- A well wooded landscape with scrub areas close to the coast
- A number of grand Marine Villas are located in this area taking advantage of its fine sea views, climate and picturesque character
- An area important for nature conservation particularly the vegetated coastal slopes and geomorphology
- Designed landscape and parklands associated with C18th and C19th Marine Villas and Cottage Ornés
- Secretive and tranquil

### **Past forces for change**

- Active landslip leading to creation of nationally important habitats home to assemblages of rare species
- Loss of access due to land movement through impact on roads and footpaths
- Building of grand houses and designed landscapes in the area during the C18th and C19th
- Loss of historic buildings and gardens due to land movement (demolition of Beauchamp House)
- Rebuilding of Undercliff Drive close to former Beauchamp House

### **Future forces for change**

- Continuing land movement as a result of the geomorphology of the area
- Further loss or repair of the Undercliff Drive and its impact on access and surrounding landscape and nature conservation areas
- Impact of coastal erosion and land movement on properties and designed landscapes in the area

### **Condition and Character**

The overall condition of the features of this character area is judged to be **good** and the character of the area is judged to be **strong**.

### **Sensitivities**

- Nature conservation and geomorphology value of the area
- Importance of continued natural process of coastal erosion and landslip for its nature conservation and landscape importance
- Retention and provision of access through the area
- Woodland cover
- Stone walls along Undercliff Drive
- Tranquillity

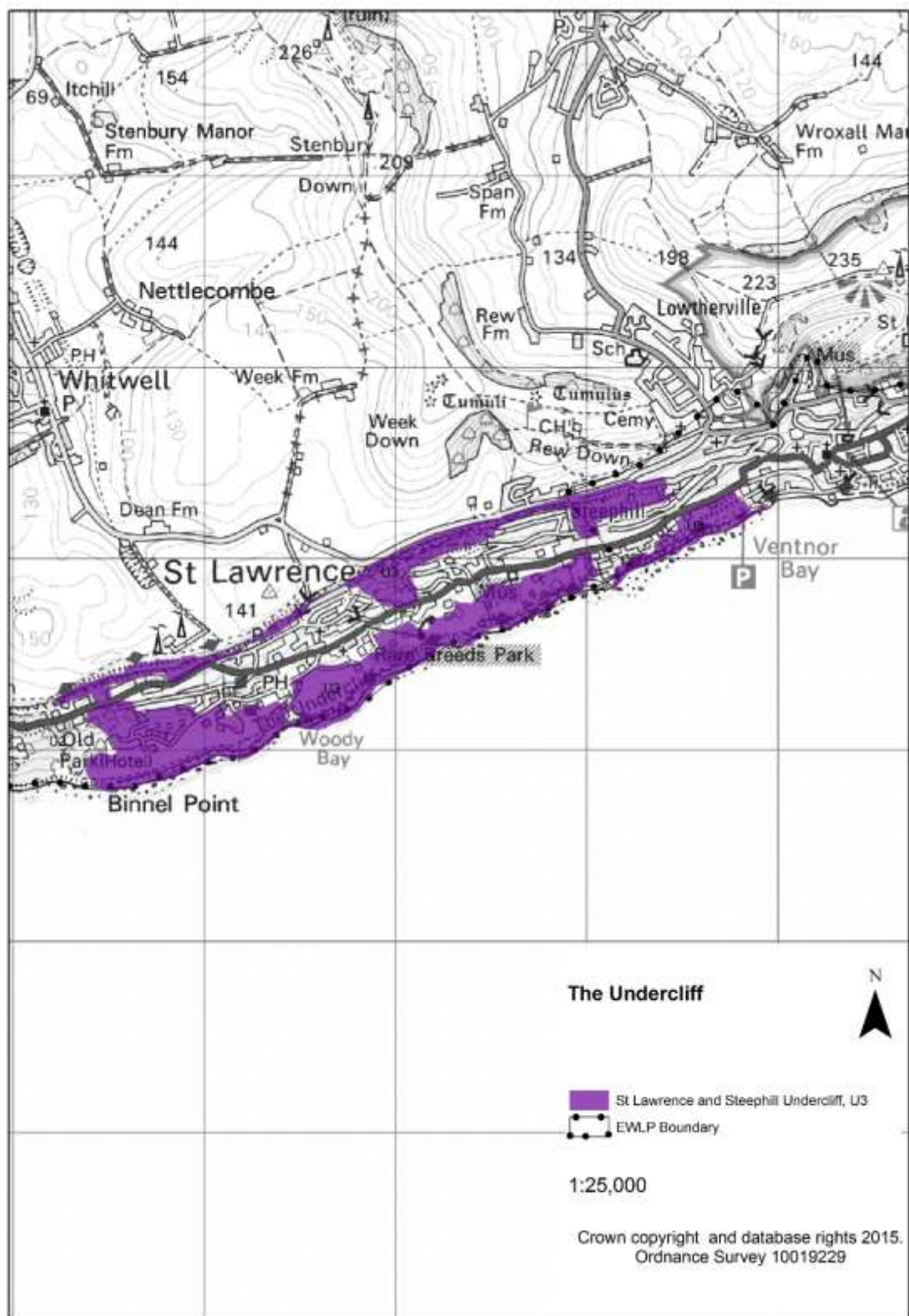
### **Landscape Strategy**

- Conserve the character and inherent qualities of this character area. These include the active landslip geomorphology and its importance for nature conservation, stone walls enclosing the Undercliff Drive, access opportunities and the secretive and tranquil nature of this well wooded area, designed landscapes , historic sites and buildings.

### **Landscape Guidelines**

- Conserve the features contributing to the character including its national and local importance for nature conservation, historic environment and landscape
- Conserve and restore stone walls as the characteristic form of enclosure of Undercliff Drive
- Manage access in the area by carefully considering how to retain or restore access affected by land movement. This includes Undercliff Drive and footpaths subject to coastal erosion and landslip.

## CHARACTER AREA U3: ST LAWRENCE AND STEEPHILL UNDERCLIFF





## Location and description

This character area extends from Old Park in the west to just west of La Falaise car park in Ventnor in the east, and from the shore in the south to the inland cliff in the north. The area skirts the settlement of St Lawrence which lies within the landslip between the inland cliff and the shore and consists of Victorian residences and C20th properties. It lies within the civil parishes of Niton & Whitwell and Ventnor.

An area of active land movement with historic landslips have formed the distinctive terraced landform. Closer to the coast the area is open with large extensively grazed pasture fields. Inland around the settlement and below the inland cliff the area is - more wooded in character with large blocks of secondary woodland. The inland cliff creates a dramatic backdrop when glimpsed through woodland or behind properties whose gardens back onto the vertical exposed rock face.

Underlying geology includes Lower Chalk, Upper Greensand and Gault. Elevation ranges from sea level in the south to around 100 metres above Ordnance Datum along the top of the inland cliff.

Stone walls are a popular means of enclosure and boundary demarcation particularly alongside the Undercliff Drive and around larger C19th properties.

Outside of the settlement of St Lawrence and the edge of the town of Ventnor which are adjacent to this area, it is largely unsettled. Exceptions to this are a number of grand Marine Villas built in the C19th to take advantage of the coastal location, climate and picturesque beauty of the area. Listed buildings and structures include: Old Park Hotel Grade II; The cottage and stables in the grounds of Old Park Grade II; Ruins in the gardens of Woolverton Manor Grade II; Park Lodge (Ventnor Park) Grade II. Many more listed buildings are found in the adjacent settlement areas. Ventnor Park and the War Memorial in Park Avenue (both within this area) are on the Local List. Part of the Ventnor Conservation Area is included in the very east of this area around Ventnor Park, and a small part of the St Lawrence Conservation Area falls within the area further to the west.

Steephill Cove is located adjacent to this area and is an example of a traditional fishing village similar to many others on the Island which have subsequently developed into seaside resorts.

The Historic Landscape Characterisation tells us that area includes areas of C18th plantation woodland, C19th and C20th secondary woodland, some reorganised fields south of Old Park dating from the C19th, rough ground, a small designed landscape dating from the C18th at St Lawrence Cottage and a parkland/garden at Lisle Combe dating from the C19th and C20th, a public park at Ventnor Park dating from the C19th and Ventnor Botanic Gardens dating from the C20th. The area falls

within The Undercliff Historic Landscape Character Area and in the medieval parishes of Newchurch, Whitwell, Godshill and St Lawrence.

Ventnor Botanic Gardens built in the grounds of the former Royal National Hospital for diseases of the chest is on the national Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest.

Around 75% of this character area is designated as part of the Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (close to the coast and in the west of the area).

Parts of the coastal strip and part of the inland cliff is within the Compton Chine to Steephill Cove Site of Special Scientific Interest, recognising its national nature conservation importance for vegetated cliffs and coastal slopes and geomorphology.

Around 33% of the area is benefitting from Environmental Stewardship.

Access in the area includes the Coastal Path which follows the top of the inland cliff and then drops down into the landslip area at St Lawrence and then along the lower cliff top to Ventnor. Other paths connect settlement with the coast or inland cliff top. Large open spaces at Ventnor Botanic Garden, Flowers Brook and La Falaise offer expansive views of the coast and English Channel.

In the west of the area the Undercliff Drive has been subject to recent land movement resulting in the severance of the route after a significant landslip in 2014. This has also resulted in the need to evacuate adjacent private properties under threat.

### **Key Characteristics**

- Open coastal cliff top grasslands with panoramic views of the coastline and out to sea
- Wooded areas inland around settlement and below the inland cliff
- Stone walls are a feature of the area and in particular alongside the Undercliff Drive
- Nature conservation and geomorphology of national interest
- Designed landscape and parklands associated with C18th and C19th Marine Villas and Cottages Ornés
- Ventnor Botanic Garden of national significance

### **Past forces for change**

- Historic land movement and landslips
- Coastal erosion
- Influence of designed landscapes and parkland associated with C18th and C19th Marine Villas and Cottages Ornés
- C19th and C20th development of smaller properties
- Creation of public open spaces, parks and the Botanic Gardens

## **Future forces for change**

- Further coastal erosion and landslips
- Potential loss of access to some areas through loss of paths and roads
- Continued benefits from Environmental Stewardship investment
- Possible offshore tidal energy research and development with onshore requirement for connection to the national grid

## **Condition and Character**

The overall condition of the features of this character area is judged to be **good** and the character of the area is judged to be **strong**.

## **Sensitivities**

- Open space and coastal and sea views
- Stone walls as a means of enclosure
- Importance of the continued natural process of coastal erosion and landslip for its nature conservation value balanced with its impact on property and access
- Nature conservation and geomorphology interest of the area
- Remaining designed landscapes associated with Marine Villas, Cottage Ornés, public parks and Ventnor Botanic Garden

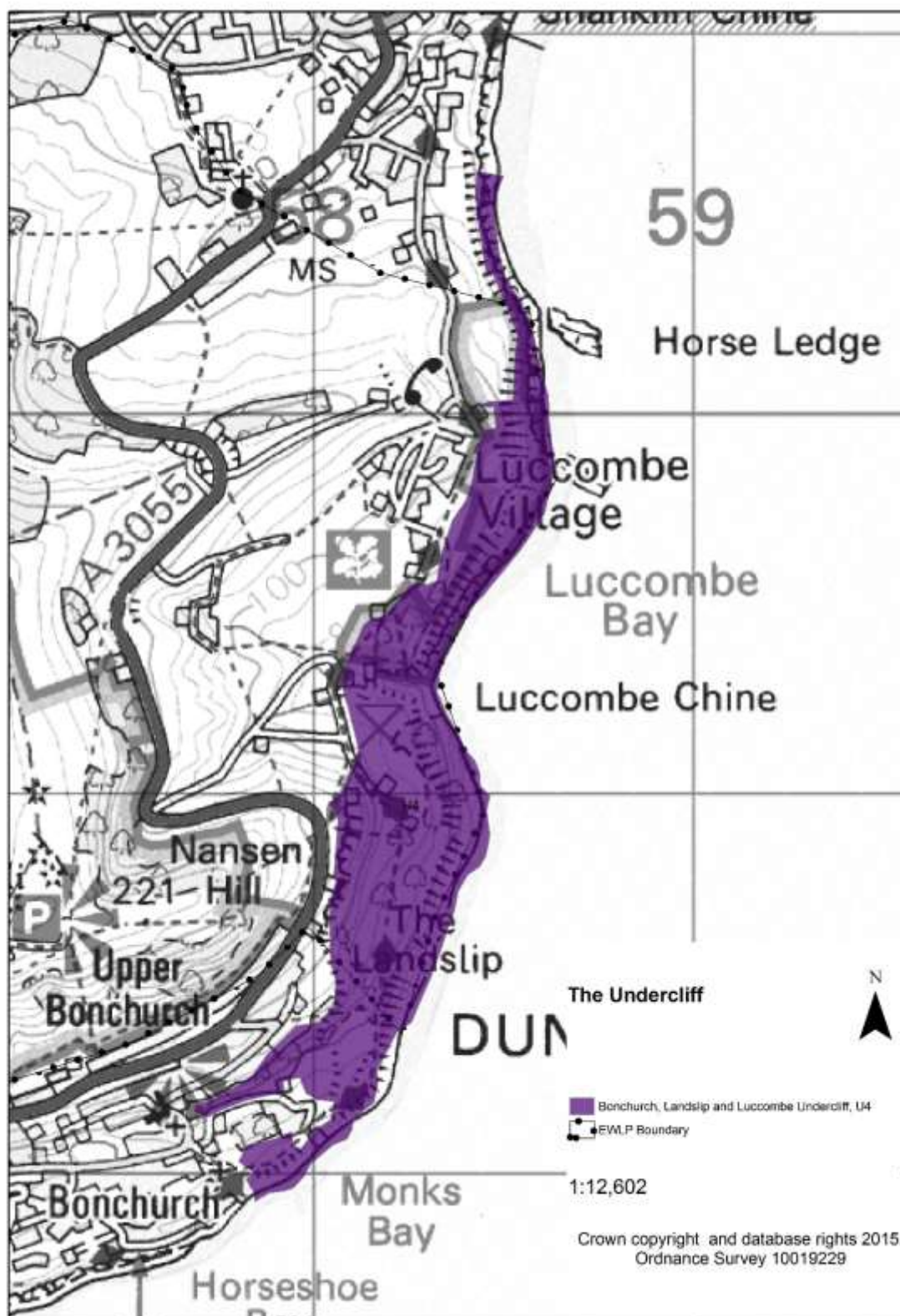
## **Landscape Strategy**

Conserve the character and inherent qualities of this character area. These include vegetated cliffs and coastal slopes, the geomorphology of this active landslide complex, stone walls, designed parks and gardens, open coastal aspect and sea views.

## **Landscape Guidelines**

- Conserve and repair stone walls used as enclosure and the demarcation of boundaries
- Promote the geological, geomorphology and nature conservation and historic environmental interest of this area and where possible enhance those features and habitats of key importance
- Retain the open character of the area close to the coastline and the opportunities that this and the public rights of way network give for quiet enjoyment

# CHARACTER AREA U4: BONCHURCH, LANDSLIP AND LUCCOMBE UNDERCLIFF



## Location and description

This character area is located east of the village of Bonchurch extending northwards along the coastline just east of the village of Luccombe to just south of the town of Shanklin. It includes a large area of historic and still active land movement known as 'The Landslip'. It falls within the Shanklin and Ventnor civil parishes.

Underlying geology includes Lower Chalk, Upper Greensand, Carstone, Sandrock Formation and Gault. Elevation ranges from sea level to 130 metres above Ordnance Datum to the west.

The area is well wooded with some more open areas on the cliff tops and associated with the grounds of Luccombe Chine Hotel. The Landslip itself is very picturesque with dense secondary woodland, wet areas close to spring lines and the dramatic grandeur of the inland cliff. Luccombe Common is a flatter area of scrub and rough ground above Luccombe Chine. Luccombe Chine is a dramatic ravine scoured out by a small stream running eastwards to the coast.

The area is largely unsettled with the exception of Luccombe Chine Hotel, a few properties within the northern end of The Landslip, the Smuggler's Haven Tearooms on the western edge of the area above The Landslip and some coastal cottages at Monks Bay near Bonchurch. The Tower in the grounds of Luccombe Chine Hotel is a Grade II listed structure. Luccombe Chine Hotel and its gardens are on the Local List having been originally designed as a cottage orné and with ornamental gardens including natural and channel streams, cascades and footbridges. The Grade II listed castellated tower is part of this design. Further designed landscapes are located just outside of the character area in the settlement of Bonchurch to the west with part of the designed grounds of East Dene within the area. A small part of the Bonchurch Conservation Area is located on the western edge of this character area.

The Historic Landscape Characterisation tells us that the majority of the area is landslip, C19th and C20th secondary woodland cover (however the SSSI citation for Bonchurch Landslips suggests the presence of primary ash woodland in this area), small designed landscapes from the C19th and C20th (Luccombe Chine Hotel, East Dene, Smuggler's Haven), some small areas of enclosed common/waste/green and areas of coastal slope and rough ground. The area is within The Undercliff and South Wight Downland Historic Landscape Character Areas and Shanklin and Bonchurch medieval parishes. St Boniface (Old Church) at Bonchurch lies just outside of the area to the west and is of Norman origin. It is on the national Heritage at Risk register due to slow decay of stone work with cracking and defective rainwater goods and drainage.

Around 50% of the area is designated as part of the Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (north of the area around Luccombe).

The Landslip and other land movement areas are of international importance for nature conservation lying partly within the South Wight Maritime Special Conservation Area. Bonchurch Landslips are nationally recognised for their nature conservation in particular the primary ash woodland with some oak and beech trees including some veteran trees, important lichen communities and areas of acid, chalk and neutral plant communities in close proximity due to the varied geology. The geomorphology interest is also included in the citation.

The Coastal Path passes through the area and is met by a number of paths connecting the area with the land either above the inland cliff or inland from the coast. Two of these have particularly picturesque and dramatic features as the paths rise up the inland cliff. Known as the Chink and the Devil's Chimney these hidden paths are said to have been used by smugglers bringing contraband ashore along this coastline and carrying it up the cliffs hidden from view.

### **Key Characteristics**

- A well wooded terraced landscape within an area of active land movement
- Tranquil and secretive in character
- Dramatic inland cliff and paths which climb them
- Nature conservation and geomorphology and landscape value reflected in the level of international and national designation
- Designed landscapes associated with large houses such as East Dene and Luccombe Chine Hotel

### **Past forces for change**

- Landslip and coastal erosion
- Potential loss of public access due to land movement
- Historic landslips creating a mosaic of habitats and conditions including wet areas in valley floors and where springs rise at the base of the inland cliff, scrub, secondary woodland, exposed rock, grasslands and eroding cliffs and slopes. This creates a geologically complex area of high biodiversity and landscape value

### **Future forces for change**

- Further coastal erosion and landslips
- Potential loss of access to some areas through loss of paths

### **Condition and Character**

The overall condition of the features of this character area is judged to be **good** and the character of the area is judged to be **strong**.



## **Sensitivities**

- Nature conservation and geomorphology value of the area
- Tranquillity and secretive character of a well wooded area
- Public access and in particular the Coastal Path
- Undeveloped and 'wild' character

## **Landscape Strategy**

- Conserve the character and inherent qualities of this character area. These include the Coastal Path, access up the inland cliff, the tranquil, undeveloped and wild character of the area, and its nature conservation, geomorphology and historic structures and designed landscapes.

## **Landscape Guidelines**

- Seek to retain public access in an area subject to land movement where safe to do so
- Promote the geological, historic environment and nature conservation interest of the area, conserving and where possible enhancing those features and habitats of key importance
- Retain the area's tranquil character and 'wild' qualities

## LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE: VALLEY FLOOR



Sandown Levels during winter floods viewed from Brading Down.



View east into the marshes on the former Brading Haven at the Great Sluice.



Eastern Yar valley floor at Roud.



Hersey Nature Reserve at Springvale.



Eastern Yar north of Lynch Copse  
at Newchurch close to Parsonage  
Farm.

This Landscape Character Type is located where there is a distinct valley floor alongside watercourses or wetland areas in the East Wight. The largest of these relates to the valley floor of the Eastern Yar which extends from Whitwell in the south to the edge of the former Brading Haven by Bembridge Harbour in the east. The longest watercourse in the area it has a major influence on the surrounding landscape and its valley floor varies from the wide open reclaimed lands at Brading Marshes and Sandown Levels to the pasture and arable flanked valley floor through the Arreton Valley and wooded and narrow valley floor flanked by pasture lands along the upper reaches of the river. The Eastern Yar is joined by two tributaries which flow northwards from the base of the southern downland, Scotchell's Brook and the Wroxall Stream. These narrow valleys are distinct features in the wider landscape. North of the central chalk ridge there are valley floor areas to the south of Seaview Duver and alongside the Monktonmead Brook south of the town of Ryde.

These valley floor areas are important wetland areas with many being internationally, nationally and locally designated for this wildlife interest. Historic structures associated with reclamation, former sea access or containment, and bridges over the watercourses are important part of its character. Withybeds, ancient woodland, secondary woodland, wet pasture meadows, marsh and bog are all found throughout the area. Large areas of peat deposits are of particular importance as palaeo-environments and archaeological sites with the preservation of organic material due to their waterlogged condition.

Scrub encroachment, the spread of non native invasive plant species such as Himalayan Balsam, the impact on watercourse quality and condition from diffuse pollution and soil erosion from adjacent agricultural areas and settlements can be a problem in some areas.

Large parts of these areas have received investment through the Environmental Stewardship scheme.

### **Key Characteristics**

- Open areas close to lower reaches of watercourses contrasting with narrow and often wooded valleys upstream
- Ancient woodland areas
- Nature conservation interest and importance of wetland areas
- Historic structures and buildings, paleo-environments and archaeological sites with preservation of organic material due to their waterlogged condition
- Access provided by public rights of way including promoted routes such as the Yar River Trail



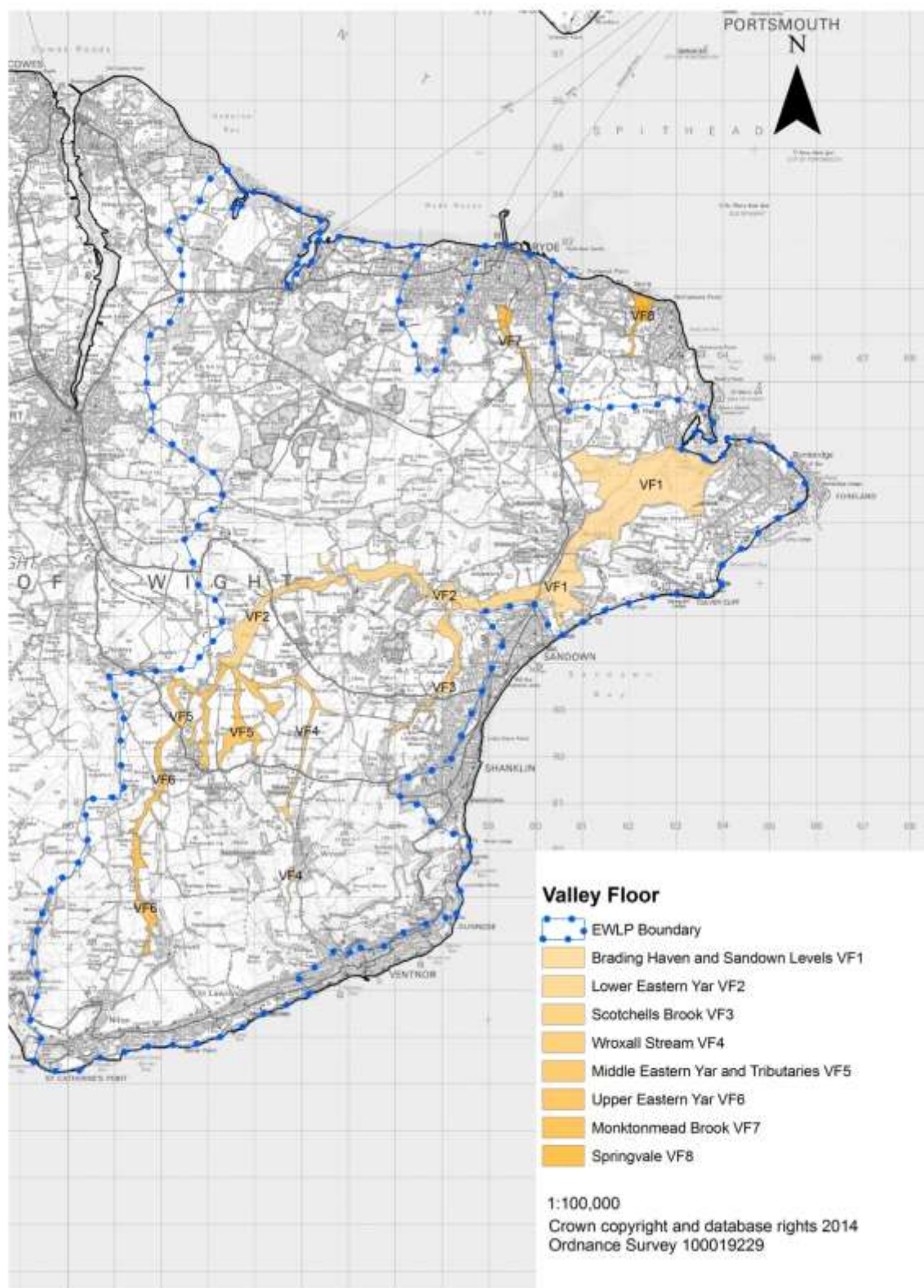
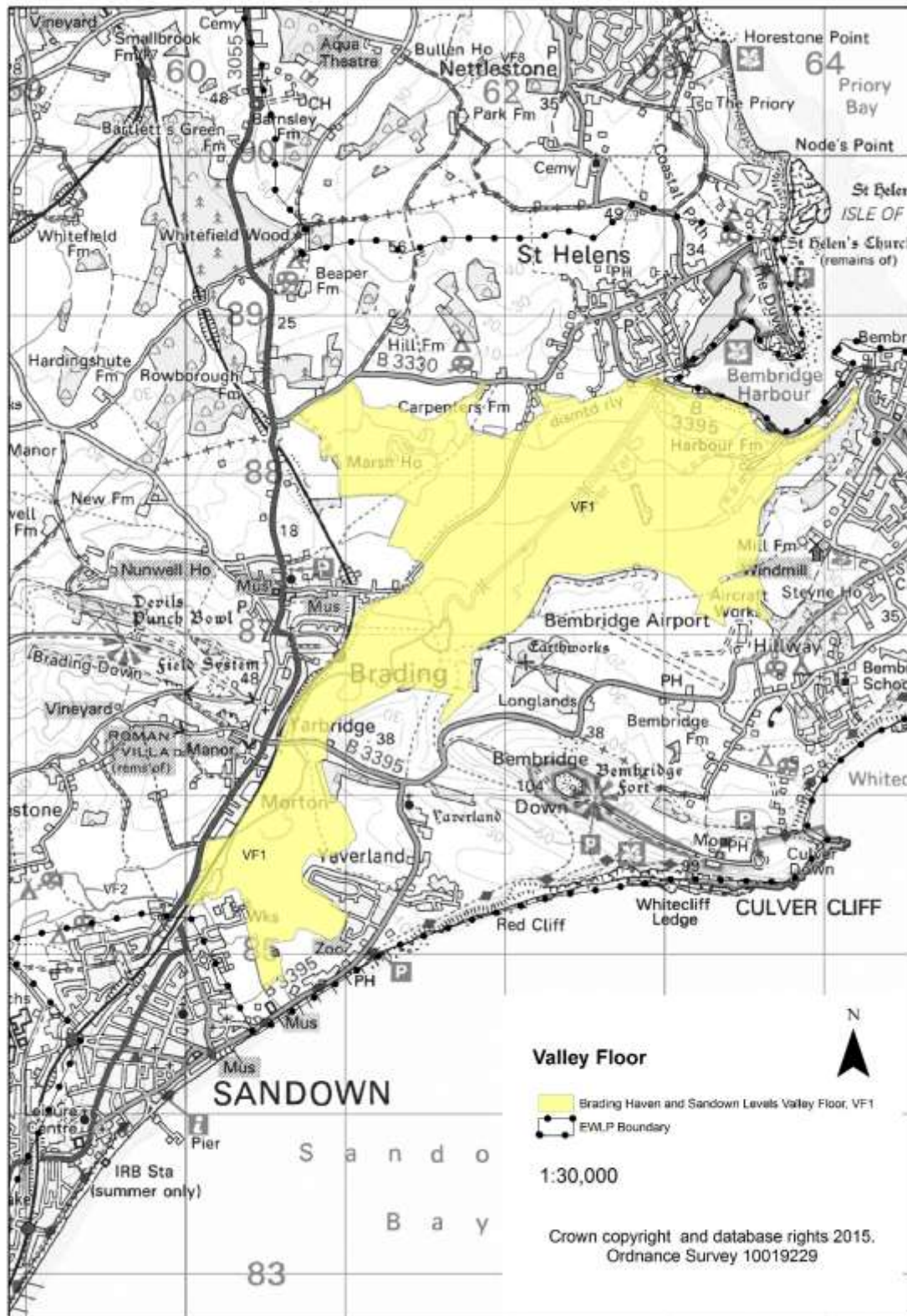


Figure 36: Valley Floor Landscape Character Areas

## CHARACTER AREA VF1: BRADING HAVEN AND SANDOWN LEVELS





## Location and description

This character area is a large open and flat area of reclaimed land in the former Brading Haven and Sandown Levels in the east of the East Wight through which the around 4.5 km of the Eastern Yar river passes before it meets the sea at Bembridge Harbour. The area extends south of Embankment Road at Bembridge and Carpenters Road St Helens, east of the town of Brading and west of the old sea wall and Centurions Copse. It lies within the civil parishes of Bembridge, Sandown, Brading and St Helens.

Underlying geology is very complex consisting of many of the rock types found on the Isle of Wight including: Wealden Group, Wealden Clay, Atherfield Clay, Upper Chalk, Lower and Middle Chalk, Upper Greensand, Carstone, Sandrock Formation, Gault, Ferruginous Sands, Reading Formation, London Clay, Bracklesham Beds, Bembridge Marls, Bembridge Limestone, Hamstead Beds, Headon and Osborne Beds. In some areas this is overlain with Alluvium and Tidal Flats. Elevation ranges from sea level to 10 metres above Ordnance Datum.

The town of Brading was once a port being navigable from the north via a large tidal body known as Brading Haven. It is thought that the location of the nearby Brading Roman Villa may have taken advantage of the safe haven and navigation opportunities provided by this area. Brading may also have been accessible from the south at high tide via Sandown Bay effectively leading to Bembridge and Yaverland being an Island, with a causeway at Morton Common providing access at low tide. The Richards family of Yaverland Manor built a causeway at Yarbridge in the C13th allowing access at low tide, this was later replaced with a bridge as part of land reclamation in the area.

Reclamation of land is thought to have commenced in the C16th with Sandown Levels, the area close to Yarbridge and North Marsh close to Carpenters Road all dating from this period. This led to the loss of the original quay side in Brading and the building of a new quay and sea wall at the end of Quay Lane. In the early C17th a large area was reclaimed north of the sea wall however this failed within ten years due to a major storm which also re profiled the harbour entrance at Bembridge. The final reclamation came in the late C19th with the building of Embankment Road for road and rail access between St Helens and Bembridge. At this point the natural flow of the Eastern Yar was re routed into an artificial channel through the reclaimed area.

Brading Railway Station is on the very edge of this area and is an important complex of historic buildings including: Brading Station Main Building Grade II; Brading Station East Platform Grade II; Brading Station Signal Box Grade II; Brading Station Footbridge Grade II. With the exception of Brading Railway Station this area is unsettled. The old sea wall and the old quay side can still be seen and a footpath (part of the Bembridge Trail) runs along the top of the old sea wall from below

Bembridge Windmill to the bottom of Quay Lane at Brading. The old sea wall is on the Local List.

The Historic Landscape Characterisation tells us that the field pattern that we see today is due to reclamation of land in the Post Medieval period and the C19th. In the east of the area some larger fields were formed through the amalgamation of smaller fields in the C19th and C20th. The area is within the Brading Haven and Bembridge Isle Historic Landscape Character Area and the medieval parishes of St Helens, Yaverland and Brading.

Around 20% of this area is designated as part of the Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (close to Brading and Morton and on the edge of Bembridge Down).

The reclaimed grazing marsh and wetland areas alongside the Eastern Yar river have high nature conservation value. This is recognised by the level of international and national designations covering the area. It lies within the Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar site important for its estuarine habitats and species and in particular its importance for bird species. This same area also falls within the nationally important Brading Marshes to St Helens Ledges Site of Special Scientific Interest. More than 80% of the SSSI but less than 90% of the SSSI is in favourable or unfavourable recovering condition. There are also issues with the spread of non native invasive species and in particular *Crassula helmsii* and Himalayan Balsam. Fish populations are prevented from entering the river system due to a number of barriers including sluice gates.

The saline and brackish lagoons in the east of the area located behind Embankment Road are part of the Solent and Isle of Wight Lagoons Special Area of Conservation, internationally important for their population of starlet sea anemone.

Much of the area which is outside of the national and international designations is identified as being of local importance. These Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation include: Morton Marsh; Marshcombe Copse (part); Brading Marsh North; Sandown Levels. Most of this character area is within the Eastern Yar Valley Biodiversity Opportunity Area.

Any enclosure is in the form of wire fencing with few if any hedgerows. There are individual trees within the area but they are infrequent and not a real feature of the landscape. Woodland is found on the edges of the area and in particular at Centurions Copse and Marshcombe Copse. A small area of additional tree planting has taken place in the very east of the area close to Mill Farm.

80% of the area is benefitting from Environmental Stewardship at entry level with higher level schemes. A large part of this area is managed by nature conservation

charitable organisations including the RSPB and the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust.

The Bembridge Trail, numerous other footpaths and part of the route of the old railway line from Brading to St Helens all provide opportunities for access to the area. Part of the Yar River Trail passes through this area.

### **Key Characteristics**

- Open and flat landscape
- Historic interest due to comparatively recent reclamation of land from the former Brading Haven and the presence of former maritime structures such as the old quay and old sea wall
- Wetland nature conservation interest and value in particular for bird species and for its saline/brackish lagoons
- A tranquil area

### **Past forces for change**

- Changes in sea level and land reclamation to create grazing marshes
- Artificial channelling of the Eastern Yar river through the area
- Ownership by conservation charities
- Spread of invasive non native species such as *Crassula helmsii*
- Introduction and spread of the non native invasive Himalayan Balsam, the Plant Positive Project seeking to address this issue
- Investment in nature conservation, landscape and historic environments through the Environmental Stewardship scheme

### **Future forces for change**

- Sea level rise and flooding due to heavy rainfall
- Possible re profiling of artificial channelling of the Eastern Yar to reflect its historic route
- Scrub growth
- Climate change, sea level rise and flooding

### **Condition and Character**

The overall condition of the features of this character area is judged to be **good** and the character of the area is judged to be **strong**.

### **Sensitivities**

- Wetland habitats and species reliant upon them

- Historic structures associated with the stages in the reclamation of land in the area (old quay, old sea wall)
- Openness and flat character of the area

### **Landscape Strategy**

- Conserve and continue to enhance the inherent qualities and features of this landscape character area. These include its wetland habitat interest, the historic buildings and structures in the area, its open and flat character, its tranquillity.

### **Landscape Guidelines**

- Conserve and enhance the wetland habitat of great nature conservation value
- Conserve and where possible repair the historic features associated with the former Brading Haven and at Brading Railway Station
- Retain existing and identify opportunities for increased access in ways which are not detrimental to its natural or historic environments
- Avoid any development which would introduce significant vertical features into this flat and open landscape
- Identify ways to restore a more natural profile to the lower reaches of the Eastern Yar that also minimise any flood risk to adjacent properties and benefit wildlife

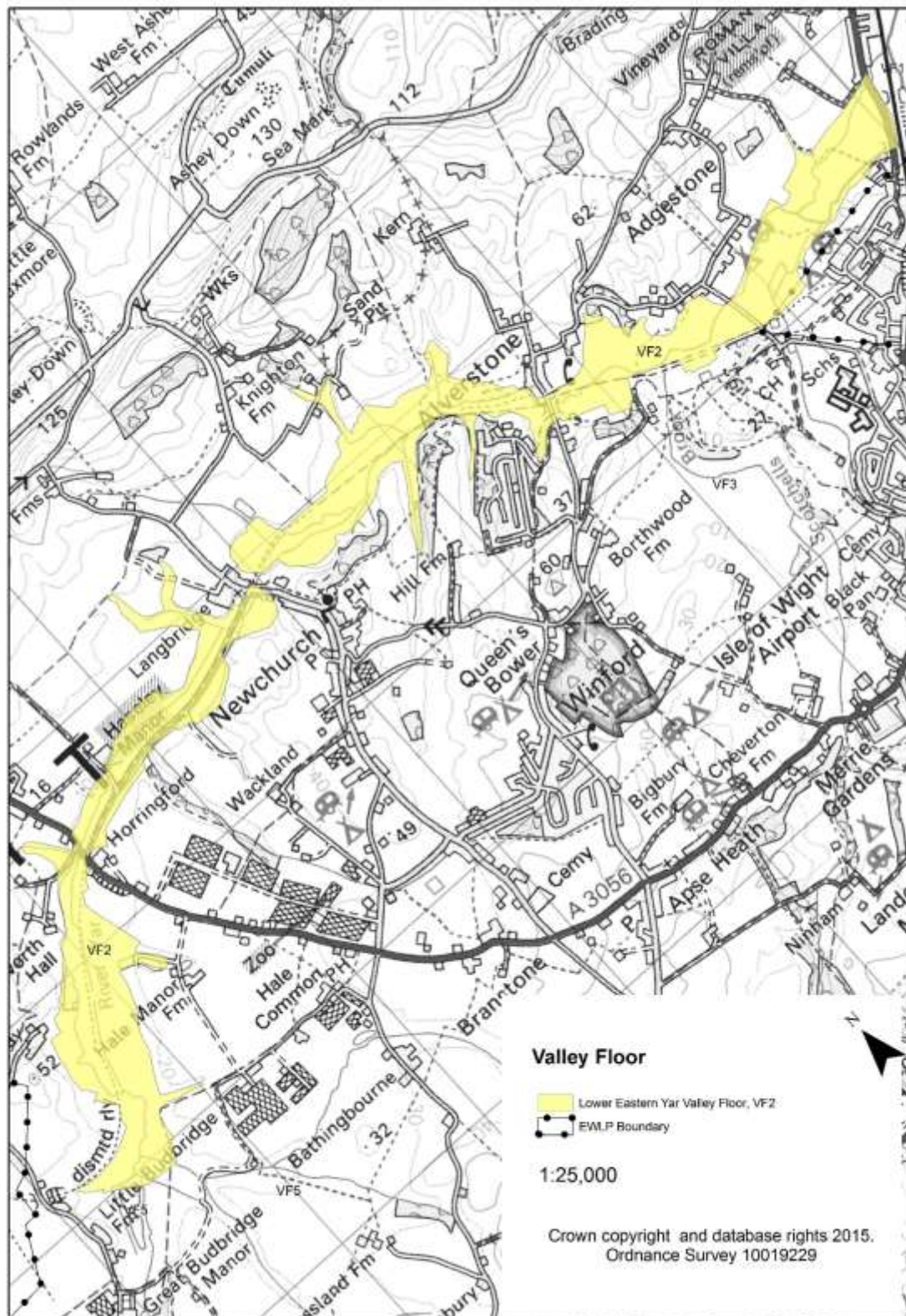


Eastern Yar west of the Great Sluice with the town of Brading on the right.





## CHARACTER AREA VF2: LOWER EASTERN YAR VALLEY FLOOR





## Location and description

This character area is the valley floor of the Eastern Yar and some minor tributaries for around 8 kilometres between Macketts in the west and Morton Common in the east and is less than half a kilometre in width at its widest point. Because of the length of this narrow character area alongside the River Yar it lies within many civil parishes including: Arreton, Newchurch, Sandown, Brading and Lake.

The underlying geology of the area is predominantly Ferruginous Sands with a small area of Wealden Group, Wealden Clay and Atherfield Clay overlain with River Terrace Gravel and Alluvium deposits. Elevation ranges from sea level to just under 20 metres above Ordnance Datum.

The valley floor includes areas of grazing marsh, secondary woodland and ancient woodland and rough ground. The Eastern Yar has a more natural profile through this area, although it has a narrow channel and is not always connected to the adjacent flood plain. Invasive non native species are problematic, particularly Himalayan Balsam. The management of the adjacent pastures has a direct impact on the water quality of the river and catchment sensitive farming approaches are essential. Much of the area between Langbridge and Morton is under the management of conservation charities and/or in Environmental Stewardship. Between Morton and Langbridge the landform rises steeply to the north with pasture lands on sandstone and the central chalk downs beyond. To the south the land rises to pasture land over sandstone. West of Langbridge the surrounding landscape is flatter and there is an increase in arable cultivation on adjacent Ferruginous Sands. Run off of soil into watercourses in this area can have a major impact on the water quality and flow rates.

Largely unsettled, the grade II listed Alverstone Bridge is the only listed structure in the area.

The Historic Landscape Characterisation tells us that the field pattern in the area is largely grazing marsh of undetermined date, there are also areas of amalgamated fields dating from the C19th a small area of enclosed heathland dating from the medieval period, a number of enclosed pastures and meadows of undetermined date and part of an enclosed parkland close to Haseley Manor dating from the C19th. The character area is partly within the Arreton Valley and Brading Haven & Bembridge Isle Historic Landscape Character Areas and the medieval parishes of Newchurch, Arreton and Brading. The monastic grange at Haseley Manor is on the edge of this character area and is a scheduled monument.

Around 30% of the character area is designated as part of the Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty close to Alverstone.

Alverstone Marshes is a Site of Special Scientific Interest of national importance for its wetland, woodland and neutral grasslands. Its overall condition is unfavourable declining due to encroachment of scrub and lack of active management in some areas leading to loss of fen habitat. Other parts of the area are recognised locally for their wildlife value as Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation including: the edge of Youngwoods Copse, Alverstone Marsh East, Redway Farm (wetland), Newchurch Marshes and the edge of Lynch Copse.

Much of the area lies within the Eastern Yar Valley Biodiversity Opportunity Area an indication of its potential for wetland habitat.

Adjacent woodland areas at Youngwoods Copse and Lynch Copse are ancient woodlands. Additional woodland has been planted at Stickworth, Horingford, Langbridge and Mersley.

Around 80% of the area is benefitting from Environmental Stewardship at entry level or entry level with higher level.

The disused Newport to Sandown railway line runs alongside the Eastern Yar in the valley through this area. This route is a public right of way over much of its length and also part of the Sustrans National Cycleway Route 23. Part of the Yar River Trail follows this route.

### **Key Characteristics**

- Flat valley floor
- Flanked by grazing marshes
- Some areas of high nature conservation and landscape value
- Course of the Eastern Yar River passes through the area
- The disused railway line provides access through the area

### **Past forces for change**

- Construction and closure of the railway line
- Scrub growth and alder and willow carr increase
- Impact on the quality of the watercourse from adjacent farmland management practices
- Introduction and spread of the non native invasive Himalayan Balsam, the Plant Positive Project seeking to address this issue
- Ownership by conservation charities
- Investment in nature conservation, landscape and historic environments through the Environmental Stewardship scheme

### **Future forces for change**

- Benefits of continued control of invasive non native species
- Benefits from continued Environmental Stewardship investment

- Improvement in the condition of the Alverstone Marshes Site of Special Scientific Interest.
- Climate change and flooding

### **Condition and Character**

The overall condition of this character area is judged to be **good** although the SSSI is declining and requires improvement. The character of the area is judged to be **strong**.

### **Sensitivities**

- Nature conservation value of wetlands and the Eastern Yar
- Access and enjoyment afforded by the cycletrack and public rights of way in the area
- Valley floor grazing marsh
- Ancient woodland areas flanking the character area
- Archaeological and palaeoenvironmental potential of wetlands

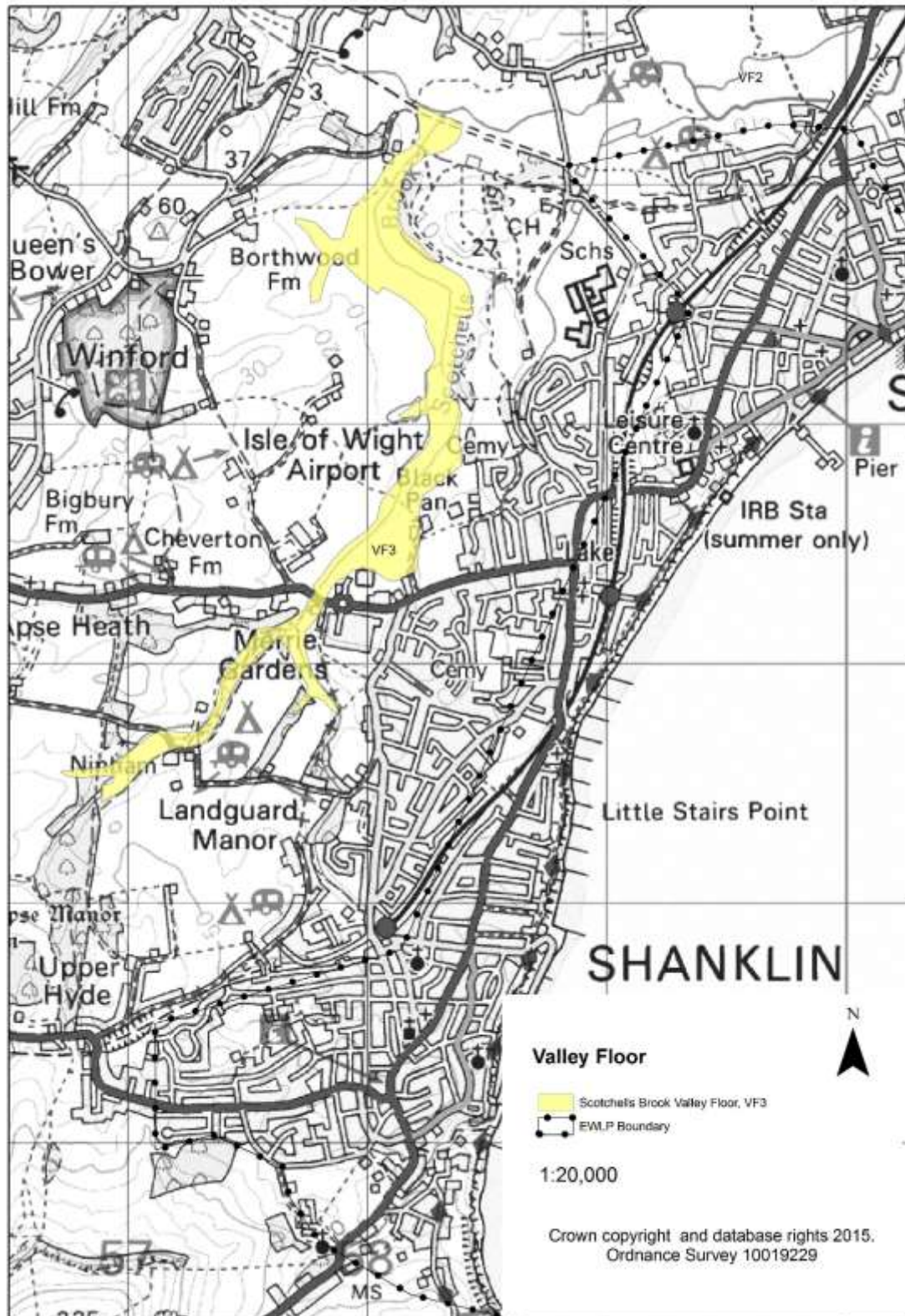
### **Landscape Strategy**

Conserve and enhance the inherent qualities and features of this landscape character area. These include the quality and condition of the Eastern Yar and the nature conservation value of the adjacent wetlands and neutral grasslands, its open and flat character and views to and from the adjacent elevated countryside.

### **Landscape Guidelines**

- Enhance the nature conservation interest of this area in particular reversing the decline in the condition of the SSSI by addressing under management and scrub encroachment
- Promote the excellent opportunities to access this area afforded by the public rights of way network and cycleway
- Continue to address the spread of non native invasive species such as Himalayan Balsam
- Work with adjacent landowners and farmers to minimise any risk from diffuse pollution or soil erosion on the watercourse

## CHARACTER AREA VF3: SCOTCHELL'S BROOK VALLEY FLOOR



## Location and description

This character area is the valley floor for Scotchell's Brook a tributary of the Eastern Yar. It extends for around 3.5 km from where it meets the Eastern Yar at Alverstone Mead just west of the Shanklin and Sandown Golf Course in the north to the northern edge of America Wood in the south at its widest it is around  $\frac{1}{4}$  km wide. It passes through the civil parishes of Shanklin, Lake, Newchurch and Sandown.

A narrow valley with wetland areas alongside the brook including a number of withy beds (osier/willow used for basket work), rough ground and grazing marsh, often edged by woodland or larger pasture fields.

Underlying geology is Ferruginous Sand which is overlain with River Terrace Deposits, Alluvium and a small area of Peat in the very west. Elevation ranges from 0 to 30 metres above Ordnance Datum.

The area is unsettled but is close to adjacent built up areas where it is crossed by Newport Road (A3056) just west of Lake. Overhead power lines are found in the north of the area.

The Historic Landscape Characterisation tells us that the field patterns seen today include grazing marsh dating from the post medieval period; enclosed waste/common/green also from the post medieval period and enclosed pasture/meadow of unspecified date. It is located within the Newchurch Environs and Sandown Bay Historic Landscape Character Area and the medieval parishes of Newchurch and Brading.

Around 25% of the area is within the Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (around the northern end close to Alverstone).

The area's wildlife importance includes a small part of the America Wood Site of Special Scientific Interest in the very south of the area and a number of Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation including: Alverstone Marshes East; Sandown Golf Course (edge of ); Old Clover Withy Beds; Ninham Withy Beds; and Barton Withy Beds. This character area is within the Eastern Yar Valley Biodiversity Opportunity Area.

Around 20% of the area is benefitting from Environmental Stewardship as part of entry with higher level or organic entry with higher level schemes.

Access in this area is limited to a few footpaths crossing the area on boardwalks in the north of the area or alongside the brook near Ninham.

## **Key Characteristics**

- Valley floor flanked by withy beds and grazing marshes
- Woodland is often a backdrop to this area particularly to the east and in the south of the area
- Wetland habitats have great nature conservation and historic environment potential
- Limited public access on linear public rights of way

## **Past forces for change**

- Enclosure of pasture/meadow, waste/common/green and creation of grazing marsh alongside the watercourse
- Introduction and spread of the non native invasive Himalayan Balsam, the Plant Positive Project seeking to address this issue
- Lack of active management of withy beds no longer used for basketwork
- Benefit from Environmental Stewardship investment

## **Future forces for change**

- Continued benefits from Environmental Stewardship investment
- Scrub encroachment in wetland areas
- Spread or control of invasive non native species such as Himalayan Balsam

## **Condition and Character**

The overall condition of the features of this character area is judged to be **good** and the character of the area is judged to be **good**.

## **Sensitivities**

- Wetland habitats and species reliant upon them
- Limited access through the area and the need to maintain boardwalks to secure continued access in the north of the area

## **Landscape Strategy**

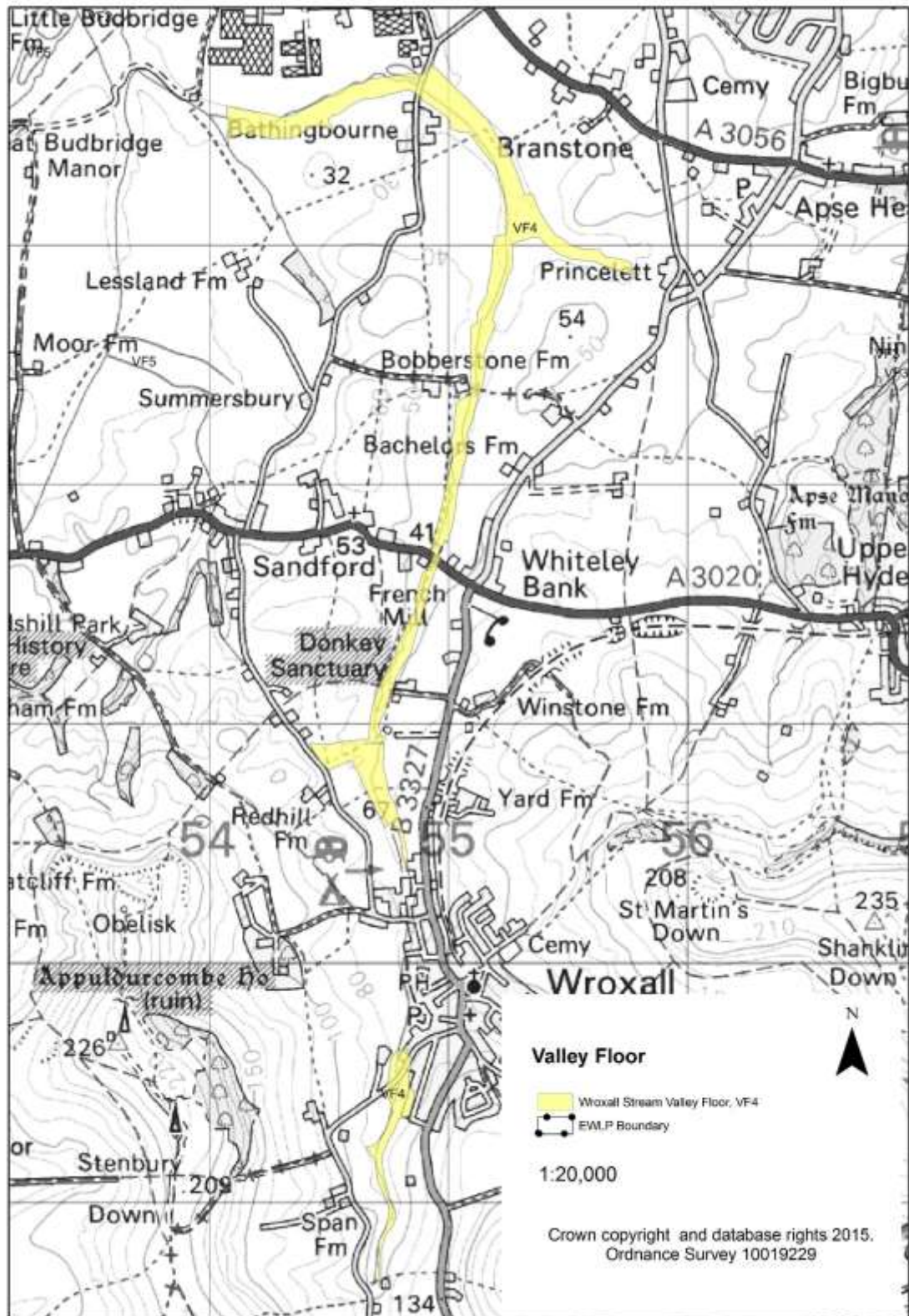
Conserve and enhance the inherent qualities and features of this character area. These include its wetland habitat interest, and the public rights of way providing access through the area.



## **Landscape Guidelines**

- Conserve and identify opportunities to enhance the wetland habitats in this character area
- Retain opportunities for access in ways which are not detrimental to its natural environment
- Control and reverse the spread of invasive non native species such as Himalayan Balsam

CHARACTER AREA VF4: WROXALL STREAM VALLEY FLOOR



## Location and description

This character area describes the valley floor of part of the Wroxall Stream. It extends from south of Wroxall in the south northwards past Whiteley Bank and then turns westward at Macketts to join with the VF5 character area. It is approximately 6.1 km in length and at its widest is around 150 metres. The area passes through the civil parishes of Godshill, Wroxall, Arreton and Newchurch (Eastern Yar being the boundary between the last two parishes).

A narrow valley particularly in the south, the Wroxall Stream is predominantly flanked by scrub and a narrow strip of woodland with some areas of grazing and rough ground close to Winstone Farm east of Redhill Lane.

Underlying geology includes Ferruginous Sands, Carstone, Sandrock Formation and Gault, this is overlain with River Terrace gravels, Alluvium and Peat deposits. Elevation ranges from 20 metres (closer to the Eastern Yar) to 90 metres (south of Wroxall) above Ordnance Datum.

The Historic Landscape Characterisation tells us that the field patterns in the area are a result of the enclosure of pasture and meadows in the post medieval period, reorganised field patterns in the C18th, amalgamation of fields in the C19th and C20th and a small area of enclosed parkland (close to Appuldurcombe) in the C20th. The character area falls within the Arreton Valley and South West Downland Edge Historic Landscape Character Areas and the medieval parishes of Newchurch, Godshill, and Arreton with the course of the Eastern Yar often demarcating the boundary.

A small part of the area in the very south is within the Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

A small part of Wroxall Meadows Site of Interest for Nature Conservation is located in this character area south west of Mountfield Road in Wroxall.

Himalayan Balsam a non native and invasive species is causing a problem along the length of Wroxall Stream its dense growth alongside the stream and adjacent wetlands out competes native plant species leading to a reduction in biodiversity.

Diffuse pollution and soil run off from adjacent farmland have the potential to affect the water quality of the stream as there are both arable and pasture fields close by.

Around 60% of the area is benefitting from investment through Environmental Stewardship within the entry level and entry level with higher level schemes.

## Key Characteristics

- A narrow river valley alongside the Wroxall Stream
- Trees and scrub flank the stream along much of its course through the area
- Larger areas of meadow are found in some areas
- Limited public access with paths tending to cross the area except between Bobberstone and Winstone where they are parallel to the stream
- Non native invasive Himalayan Balsam is found in the area

## Past forces for change

- Loss of wider areas of meadow either side of the watercourse creating a narrow often scrubby and wooded strip alongside the Wroxall Stream
- Introduction and spread of the non native invasive Himalayan Balsam, the Plant Positive Project seeking to address this issue
- Scrub encroachment
- Investment in conservation objectives through the Environmental Stewardship scheme

## Future forces for change

- Benefits of the continued control of non native invasive species
- Benefits from continued Environmental Stewardship investment
- Catchment Sensitive farming approaches in adjacent areas and the positive impact on the watercourse

## Condition and Character

The overall condition of this character area is judged to be **good** and the character of the area is judged to be **good**.

## Sensitivities

- Watercourse quality and the impact of diffuse pollution and soil erosion from adjacent farmed areas
- Narrow corridor of scrub and woodland following the stream line through the valley floor
- Control of non native invasive species

## Landscape Strategy

Conserve and enhance the inherent qualities and features of this landscape character area. These include, the watercourse itself, the narrow woodland strip, areas of meadow and public rights of way giving access to the area.

## Landscape Guidelines

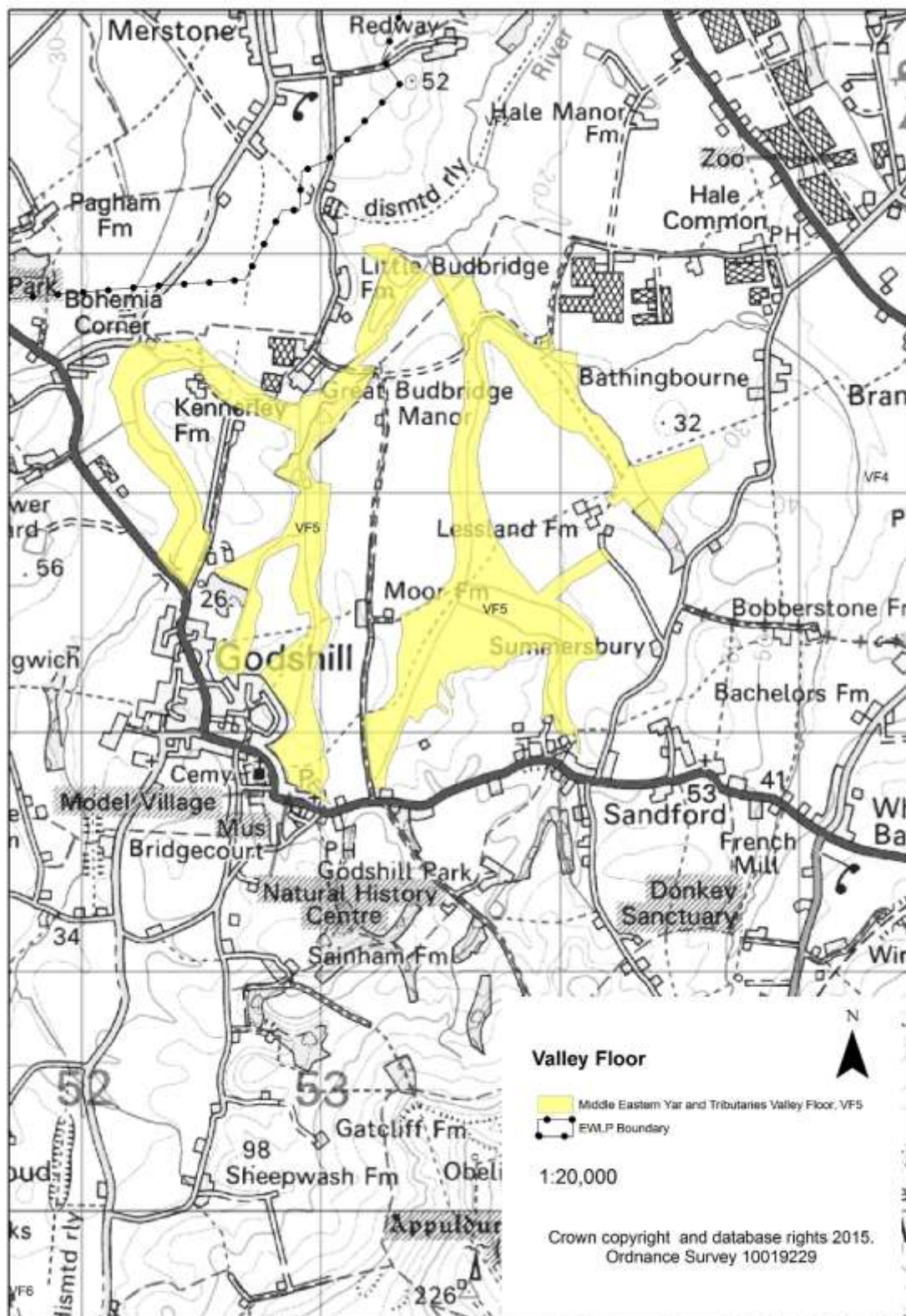
- Continue to address the spread of non native invasive species such as Himalayan Balsam
- Work with adjacent landowners and farmers to minimise any risk from diffuse pollution or soil erosion on the watercourse
- Maintain the existing public rights of way providing access to the area



Scotchell's Brook below America Woods.



## CHARACTER AREA VF5: MIDDLE EASTERN YAR AND TRIBUTARIES VALLEY FLOOR





## Location and description

Located north of the main road between Bohemia Corner and Sandford this character area includes the main river valley of the Eastern Yar in the west and a number of tributaries flowing northwards from Godshill, Sandford and Lessland Farm to join the main channel close to Great Budbridge Manor. The valley floor is well wooded or covered in scrub in most of the area particularly where it is narrow. Larger meadows are found in the valley arm between Lessland and Moor Farm north of Sandford. The area also includes a fruit tree nursery (Deacons) and ponds close to Great Budbridge Manor in the north. The character area falls within the civil parishes of Godshill, Rookley and Arreton.

Underlying geology is Ferruginous Sands overlain with Alluvium, River Terrace gravel deposits and a significant area of Peat. Elevation ranges from 20 metres to 40 metres above Ordnance Datum.

The area is largely unsettled. In the very north of the area Bow Bridge is a Grade II listed structure. Peat areas are important as a record of palaeo-environments and may have archaeological interest. The Historic Landscape Characterisation tells us that the field pattern is a result of grazing marsh of undetermined date, medieval enclosure of waste/common/ green and medieval and C19th enclosure of pasture and meadows. The character area falls within the Arreton Valley, South Wight Sandstone and Gravel and South Wight Downland Edge. It also falls within the medieval parishes of Godshill and Arreton. A small part of the area in the very south is within the Godshill Conservation Area.

The local nature conservation interest of the valley floor wetlands is highlighted by the number of Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation including: Moor Farm; Great Budbridge; Scotland Farm; Kennerly Heath and Munsley Bog. Large parts of the area lie within the Eastern Yar Valley Biodiversity Opportunity Area an indication of its potential for wetland nature conservation objectives. Willow and birch scrub encroachment are a problem in some wetland areas and Himalayan Balsam also requires control.

There has been additional tree planting close to Moor Farm.

The valley floor area is located next to more intensive arable farmed areas providing a buffer to any potential soil erosion and diffuse pollution. Around 20% of the area is benefitting for Environmental Stewardship in the entry level and entry level with higher level schemes.

A number of public rights of way pass through the area including part of the Worsley Trail, part of the Sunshine Trail (an off road cycling route) and part of the Yar Valley Trail.

## Key Characteristics

- Valley floor varying from narrow areas of scrub and woodland with some larger grazing pastures
- Significant nature conservation value of the wetland areas including those on deep peat deposits such as Munsley Bog
- Historic value of peat areas for palaeo-environments and archaeology

## Past forces for change

- Loss of meadow areas and increase in arable farming in adjacent areas
- Spread of non native invasive species
- Scrub encroachment
- Investment in conservation objectives through the Environmental Stewardship scheme

## Future forces for change

- Continued investment in conservation objectives through Environmental Stewardship
- Control or further spread of non native invasive species such as Himalayan Balsam
- Control or continued scrub encroachment
- Catchment sensitive farming practices in more intensively farmed areas adjacent to the valley floor
- Climate change and fluctuations in ground water conditions

## Condition and Character

The overall condition of the features of this character area is judged to be **good** and the character of the area is judged to be **moderate**.

## Sensitivities

- Wetland environments of nature conservation and historic environmental importance particularly areas that are rich in peat deposits
- Impact from farming practices in more intensive agricultural areas adjacent to the valley floor
- Changing water levels and their impact (particularly on peat deposits)

## Landscape Strategy

Conserve and enhance the inherent qualities and features of this landscape character area. These include the quality and condition of the watercourses, the nature conservation value of these and adjacent wetland areas, the palaeo-environmental and potential archaeological value of areas rich in peat deposits and public access.

## Landscape Guidelines

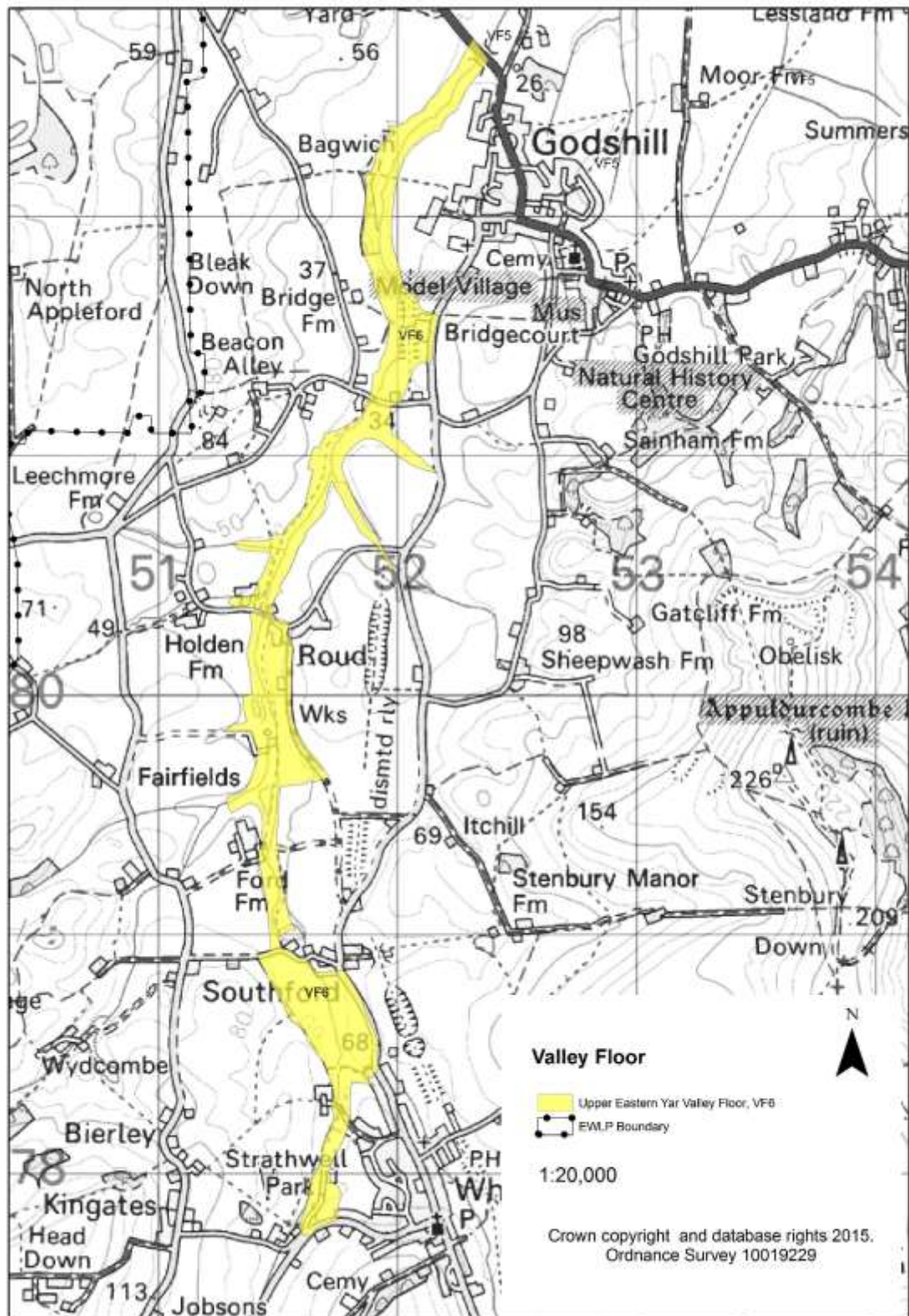
- Conserve and enhance wetland areas of importance and potential for nature conservation
- Conserve areas of importance for archaeological and palaeo-environmental value
- Continue to invest in conservation objectives via the Environmental Stewardship scheme
- Continue to control the spread of non native invasive species such as Himalayan Balsam
- Continue to work with adjacent landowners and farmers to minimise the risk from diffuse pollution or soil erosion on the watercourses



Tributary which runs into the Eastern Yar close to Budbridge.



## CHARACTER AREA VF6: UPPER EASTERN YAR VALLEY FLOOR



## **Location and description**

This character area is located towards the south of the East Wight coinciding with the upper reaches of the Eastern Yar river. Starting north of Kemming Road just west of the village of Whitwell this narrow character area extends for approximately 5.3 km northwards through the hamlet of Roud and to the bridge on Newport Road just north west of the village of Godshill. The area is within the civil parishes of Niton & Whitwell and Godshill.

This narrow valley floor area is well wooded in the north becoming more open and slightly wider in character with grazed meadows just north of Roud through to the very south of the area.

Underlying geology in the area includes Carstone, Sandrock Formation and Ferruginous Sands overlain in some areas by River Terrace Gravels and Alluvium deposits. Elevation ranges from 30 metres in the north to around 70 metres above Ordnance Datum in the south.

The area is largely unsettled with the exception of the small hamlet of Roud which consists of a few cottages, a baptist chapel and a few farmsteads it is thought to have once been a much larger settlement suffering depopulation in the C14th. Strathwell Manor is in the very south of the area. The following listed buildings are located in the area: Strathwell Manor Grade II; Roud Cottage Grade II; Bridge over the Eastern Yar Grade II; Nodyhill Grade II; Bridge Court and Bridge Court Cottage Grade II.

The Historic Landscape Characterisation tells us that the field patterns in the area are a result of medieval and post medieval enclosure of meadow and pasture, post medieval enclosure of open field strips close to the village of Whitwell and subsequent creation of parkland and designed landscape at Strathwell in the very south of the area, amalgamated fields from the C19th and the development of valley floor woodlands in C20th. The character area is within the South Wight Sandstone and South Wight Downland Edge Historic Landscape Character Areas. It also falls within the medieval parishes of Whitwell, Godshill and Niton.

Parts of the area are of local importance for their wetland habitats as Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation including: Scotland Farm and Upper Yar Valley (Roud). Much of the area lies within the Eastern Yar Valley Biodiversity Opportunity Area.

A small area of ancient woodland is located in the very north of the area on the western side of the valley floor opposite Scotland Farm.

There are many public rights of way which either cross or run through this character area including part of the route of the Yar River Trail.

Around 30% of the area is benefitting from Environmental Stewardship as part of the entry level and entry level with higher level schemes.

### **Key Characteristics**

- Well wooded valley floor in the north of the area to the west of Godshill
- The area becomes wider south of Beacon Alley with scrub and rough ground giving way to more open grazed pastures to the south around Roud and Whitwell
- Ancient woodland
- Designed parkland and ornamental grounds at Strathwell Manor in the south of the area
- A number of narrow tributaries feed into the main valley floor
- Nature conservation importance of wetland and woodland sites

### **Past forces for change**

- Gradual increase in woodland cover particularly in the north of the area
- Loss of larger settlement at Roud in medieval times may indicate archaeological importance of that area
- Investment in conservation objectives through the Environmental Stewardship scheme

### **Future forces for change**

- Scrub encroachment and further development of secondary woodland
- Control of soil erosion and diffuse pollution from the adjacent farmland and its impact on the water quality of the Eastern Yar
- Continued investment in conservation objectives through the Environmental Stewardship scheme

### **Condition and Character**

The overall condition of the features of this character area is judged as **good** and the character of the area is judged to be **strong**.

### **Sensitivities**

- Ancient woodland
- Watercourse and wetland areas
- Public rights of way through and across the area
- Potential archaeology particularly around the depopulated hamlet of Roud
- C18th designed landscape at Strathwell Manor



## **Landscape Strategy**

- Conserve and where possible enhance the inherent qualities and features of this landscape character area. These include the quality and condition of the Eastern Yar, the nature conservation value of wetlands and woodlands (including the ancient woodland areas), the historic and archaeological potential of the depopulated area of Roud and the designed parkland at Strathwell.

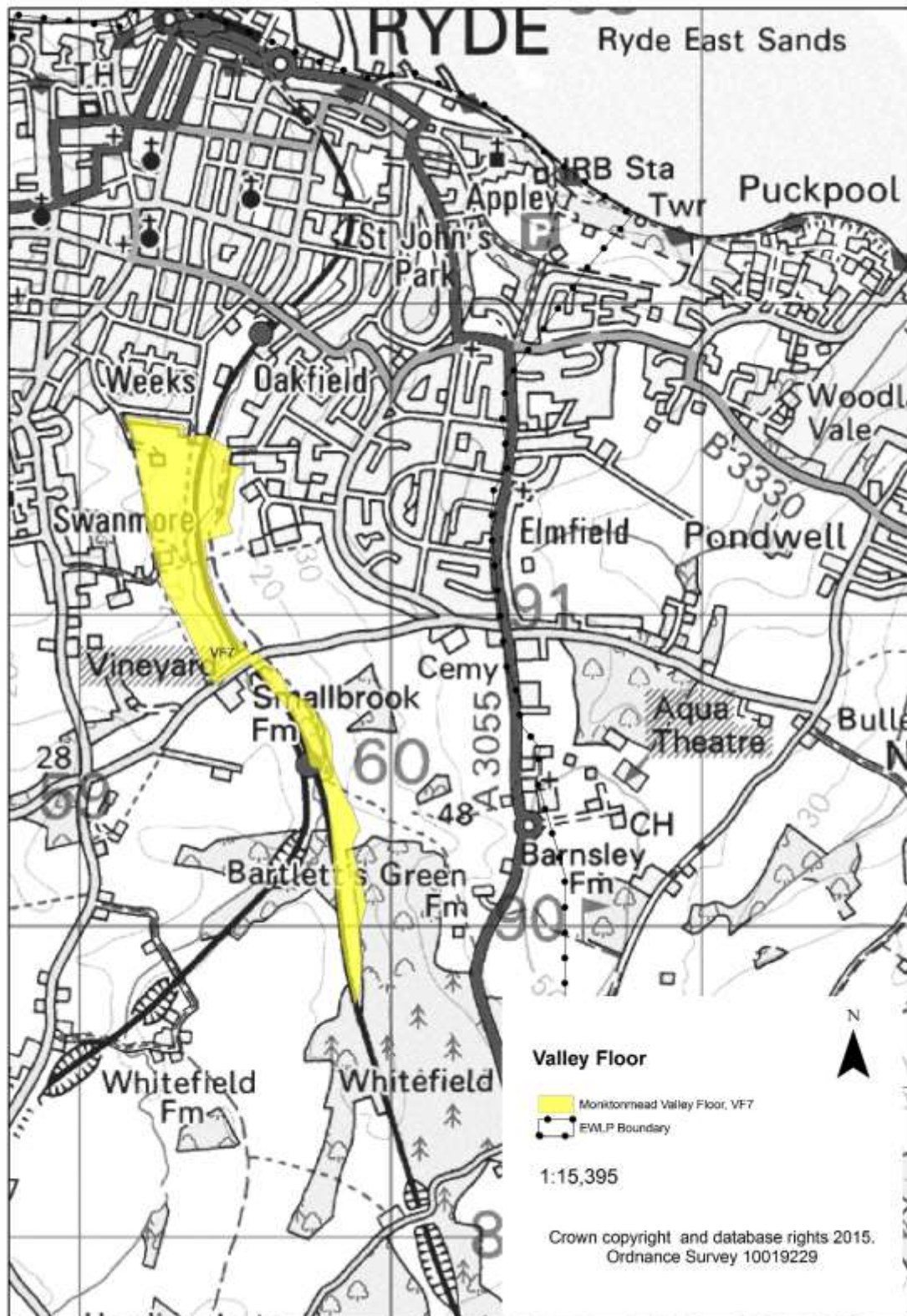
## **Landscape Guidelines**

- Conserve and enhance the nature conservation interest of the ancient woodland, woodland and wetland areas
- Carry out documentary and field research into the depopulated settlement at Roud
- Maintain access via the public rights of way network
- Appropriately manage the meadows and pastures in the valley floor



Marshy area with peat deposits south of Roud.

## CHARACTER AREA VF7: MONKTONMEAD BROOK VALLEY FLOOR



## **Location and description**

This character area is located alongside the Monktonmead Brook immediately to the south of the urban town of Ryde in the north east of the East Wight area. It extends about 2 km south becoming more narrow past Smallbrook Lane and Pennyfeathers and ends where Whitefield Woods begins. It lies within the civil parishes of Brading and Ryde.

A mix of well wooded areas particularly alongside the streamline, more open rough ground and scrub and well hedged pastures and meadows.

Underlying geology is Bembridge Marls overlain with River Terrace and Alluvium deposits in the north. Elevation ranges from less than 10 metres to around 20 metres above Ordnance Datum.

The area is largely unsettled with the exception of two properties north of Rosemary Vineyard and some buildings on the edge of the Nicholson Road Ryde Business Park in the east.

The Historic Landscape Characterisation tells us that this area contains areas of ancient woodland, enclosed pasture/ meadows of undetermined date, enclosed waste/common or green dating from the C19th, amalgamated fields from the C19th and C20th and scrub areas dating from the late C20th. The character area lies within the Northern Lowlands Historic Landscape Character Area and the St Helens, Newchurch and Brading medieval parishes.

Ancient woodland areas include: Monktonmead; Pennyfeathers and the edge of Whitefield Woods. These woodland areas are also Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation along with Swanpond Copse and Swanmore Meadows.

Additional woodland planting has taken place at Whitefield Woods on the edge of the area.

Public rights of way pass through this area including part of the Nunwell Trail. The north of the area is popular with dog walkers due to its accessibility from the nearby urban area.

## **Key Characteristics**

- Ancient woodland areas
- Monktonmead Brook running through the area
- Nature conservation value of woodland and grassland areas
- Amenity value of public footpaths and green space for adjacent urban area

### **Past forces for change**

- Development of the railway line in the C19th
- Development of the adjacent town of Ryde in the C19th extending to the edge of this area
- Scrub and secondary woodland growth
- Increased popularity of the area for recreation and access from adjacent urban areas

### **Future forces for change**

- Continued scrub encroachment and establishment of secondary woodland
- Increased pressure on habitats and open space due to potential growth of Ryde as part of the Area Action Plan (including current discussions regarding housing development at Pennyfeathers)
- Management or undermanagement of ancient woodland and grassland areas

### **Condition and Character**

The overall condition of the features of this character area is judged to be **declining** and the overall character is judged to be **moderate**.

### **Sensitivities**

- Nature conservation value of wetland, grassland and ancient woodlands
- Access opportunities and amenity value of the area and the need to balance this with nature conservation value and potential
- Management of scrub and secondary woodland encroachment
- Loss of open space through development

### **Landscape Strategy**

Conserve and enhance the inherent qualities and features of this landscape character area. These include the nature conservation interest of ancient woodland, grassland and wetland areas and the amenity and open space value of the area for the local community.

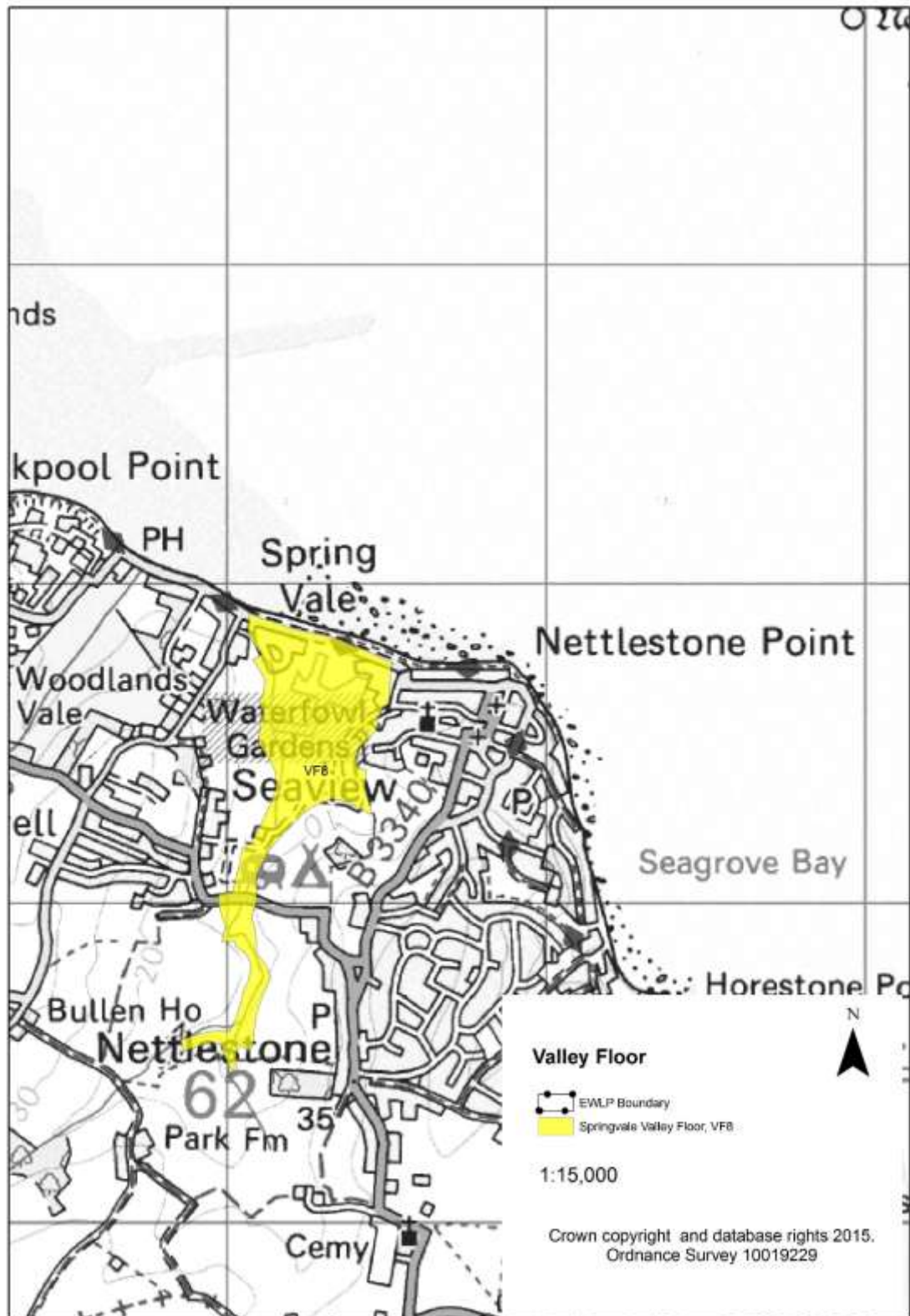
### **Landscape Guidelines**

- Enhance the nature conservation interest of this area by actively managing its woodland, grassland and wetland areas
- Encourage the continued use of the area for access and enjoyment whilst addressing and controlling any adverse impacts on nature conservation
- Identify opportunities to create links between habitats and access opportunities in any proposals for development in the this or adjacent character areas





## CHARACTER AREA VF8: SPRINGVALE VALLEY FLOOR





## **Location and description**

Located in the northeast of the East Wight this character area extends from the marshland behind the seawall at Seaview Duver southwards for around 1.5 km to just north east of Park Farm. In the north of the area the Hersey Nature Reserve was created on an area of marshland to the immediate south of a new coastal defence scheme. Either side of this, low lying manicured grassland areas are associated with holiday parks. South of these grazing marsh gives way to scrub and small pockets of woodland. The area lies within the civil parish of Nettlestone and Seaview.

Underlying geology includes: Bembridge Marls; Headon Beds and Osborne Beds these are overlain with Alluvium deposits. Elevation ranges from sea level to less than 10 metres above Ordnance Datum.

The Historic Landscape Characterisation tells us that much of this area was reclaimed in the post medieval period, is rough ground or enclosed pasture/meadow of undetermined date. It lies within the Northern Lowlands Historic Landscape Character Area and the medieval parish of St Helens (with a very small area in the south being in Brading).

The area has high importance for nature conservation. Much of the north of the area is within the Solent and Southampton Waters Ramsar site and Ryde Sands and Wootton Creek Site of Special Scientific Interest (Hersey Nature Reserve area), reflecting their international and national importance as wetland areas and in particular for bird species. In the south of the area the Nettlestone Marshes are a Site of Interest for Nature Conservation locally important wetlands.

The Hersey Nature Reserve is benefitting from Environmental Stewardship as part of the higher level scheme.

The only public access in the area is at the Hersey Nature Reserve, along the seawall and a small section of public bridleway in the east rising up to Fairy Hill.

## **Key Characteristics**

- A compact and flat area of valley floor wetland
- High nature conservation value particularly in the north of the area in the Hersey Nature Reserve

## **Past forces for change**

- Reclamation of land behind the seawall at Seaview Duver
- Scrub encroachment and secondary woodland growth
- Establishment of the Hersey Nature Reserve and access opportunities
- Nature conservation benefits from Environmental Stewardship investment

### **Future forces for change**

- Climate change and sea level rise
- Continued benefit from Environmental Stewardship investment
- Scrub encroachment and further secondary woodland growth

### **Condition and Character**

The overall condition of the features of this character area is judged to be **good** and the character of the area is judged to be **good**.

### **Sensitivities**

- Nature conservation value of this reclaimed land and wetland area
- Access and enjoyment of the Hersey Nature Reserve
- Open and flat character of the area

### **Landscape Strategy**

Conserve and enhance the inherent qualities and features of this landscape character area. These include the quality and condition of the wetland areas in particular the area of the Hersey Nature Reserve and Nettlestone Marshes and the access and enjoyment of the Hersey Nature Reserve.

### **Landscape Guidelines**

- Conserve and enhance the nature conservation interest of the area including the wetland environments and species at the Hersey Nature Reserve and Nettlestone Marshes
- Retain the public access opportunities in the area especially at the Hersey Nature Reserve
- Encourage adjacent sites to adopt grassland management that is of benefit to wildlife



## SETTLEMENT AND URBAN AREAS



Town of Brading.

Stone manor houses – Great Budbridge



Thatched cottages – Godshill

This landscape character assessment has chosen to identify the main urban areas and settlements of the East Wight as a character type in their own right.

These can be considered as falling into the following groupings based on their size and function:

Large urban areas - these are located in coastal areas in the East Wight which expanded in the C18th, C19th and C20th. Included in this group are Ryde, Sandown, Lake, Shanklin and Ventnor. Today these are busy and bustling towns and although they may have seen a decrease in visitor numbers from the heyday as coastal resorts they often retain important historic features many of which are protected by Conservation Area status

Large rural settlements - these villages and small towns are well connected to the main road or rail network and have many shops, facilities and services and expanded in the C19th and C20th. Included in this group are Bembridge, Wootton Bridge and Brading. The historic interest of some of these is also protected by their Conservation Area status.

Medium rural settlements - these villages expanded in the C19th and C20th and have a number of shops, facilities and services important to their own communities and also other neighbouring areas. These include Rookley, Niton, Arreton, Godshell, St Helens and Wroxall. The historic interest of some of these is also protected by their Conservation Area status.

Smaller rural villages and hamlets - these smaller settlement areas may have less in the way of shops and services but are large enough to be distinct built up areas. Some may have churches others may be grouped around a farmstead or just a group of cottages. The historic interest of some of these is also protected by their Conservation Area status.

Dispersed settlement of individual farmsteads and cottages fall within the other character types.

Basford (2013)<sup>ii</sup> has described in detail the evolution of settlement on the Isle of Wight as part of her Isle of Wight in the English Landscape thesis. This provides information on the likely evolution of Isle of Wight settlement up to the late C18th. A settlement pattern where there were settlements area on the Isle of Wight in 1086 than recorded in the Domesday Book, but less than the 650 individual places shown on the late C18th Ordnance Survey drawings. Historically settlement was more sparse in the clay landscapes north of the central chalk ridge. There is some suggestion that the Isle of Wight may have experienced some depopulation in the late C14th and early C15th. This may have led to many hamlets being reduced in size or even becoming the isolated farmsteads that we see today. There is evidence that small and dispersed settlements were established by the clearance of woodland

or exploitation of waste in the late Anglo-Saxon and early Medieval periods; examples being the green-edge and common edge settlements throughout the Island and the farmsteads in the north of the Isle of Wight.

Development of larger settlements seems to have evolved rather than been planned with settlement congregating around parish churches in the Anglo Saxon period and then around chapels associated with Norman Manors as these gained parish status. Nucleated settlements are an important feature of the East Wight landscape although most of these evolved rather than being planned. Settlement pattern may however have been influenced by previous settlement and land use.

In the Tudor and Jacobean period a number of grand manor houses were built across the Isle of Wight. Some of these then being 'improved' or rebuilt in the C17th and C18th with the creation of parkland and ornamental garden settings.

Significant change to the settlement pattern of the East Wight took place from the late C18th onwards. The increased popularity of the Isle of Wight as part of the English Grand Tour and the appreciation of its natural beauty as part of the new obsession with the picturesque led to the establishment of summer or permanent residences in the area. These Marine Villas and Cottages Ornées were often sited in coastal areas such as the northern coastline between Binstead and Bembridge, the south east coastline around Sandown Bay and in the Undercliff.

The coming of the railways and more convenient Solent crossing with the building of piers led to an increased interest and desire for property on the Isle of Wight in the C19th. This led to rapid growth of the towns of Ryde, Sandown, Shanklin and Ventnor with more modest villas and houses being built alongside more modest homes for those of lower income. This continued into C20th with many resorts and rural villages seeing expansion with new homes including bungalow and housing estates.

The approach to future development in the East Wight is set out in the Core Strategy of the Island Plan, this identifies the focus of growth around the Key Regeneration Areas of Ryde and The Bay (Sandown, Lake and Shanklin) and the Smaller Regeneration Area of Ventnor. A series of Rural Service Centres are also expected to expand to meet an identified local need and thereby secure the shops and services that they provide to their communities and the wider local area - these include Wootton Bridge, St Helens, Bembridge, Brading, Wroxall, Niton, Godshill, Rookley and Arreton. Development in other areas is expected to be limited.

Vernacular architecture and design of the rural farmsteads, hamlets, villages and towns of the East Wight is an important contributor to their character. The use of local stone, brick or particular design nuances often being significant.



## Key Characteristics

- Coastal Resort Towns
- Rural Villages
- Hamlets
- Individual historic buildings and structures (Listed, Scheduled Monuments and Local List)
- Conservation Areas

## Past forces for change

- Growth of fishing villages and communities into resort towns in the C18th, C19th and C20th
- Expansion of rural villages in the C19th and C20th
- Greater connection between areas due to the development of the road network, railway

## Future forces for change

- Growth and development of the Island's settlements in line with the Core Strategy of the Island Plan
- Economic conditions
- Conservation of vernacular architecture and approaches taken in relation to scale, design, materials and layout of new development

## Condition and Character

This varies across the East Wight and within each urban and settlement area. There are examples where settlement character is **strong** and condition of contributing features is **good**; there are also examples where settlement character is **declining** and condition of some contributing features is **moderate** or **poor**.

The Heritage at Risk register identifies many churches which are of architectural importance being listed buildings but are under threat due to a lack of maintenance or structural integrity problems, it also identifies Conservation Areas at Risk (Brading and Godshill).

## Landscape Strategy

Conserve and enhance the inherent qualities and features of the urban areas and settlements of the East Wight. This include its coastal resort towns, rural villages, hamlets, designed landscapes, individual buildings and structures of historic merit and Conservation Areas.

## Landscape Guidelines

- Understand the evolution of the settlement and urban areas of the East Wight, in terms of layout, architectural styles, scale, design and materials and seek to reflect this in proposals for new development
- Conserve and enhance the Conservation Areas within the East Wight
- Conserve and enhance designed landscapes in urban and settlement areas



Salterns at Seaview.



Ryde Esplanade.

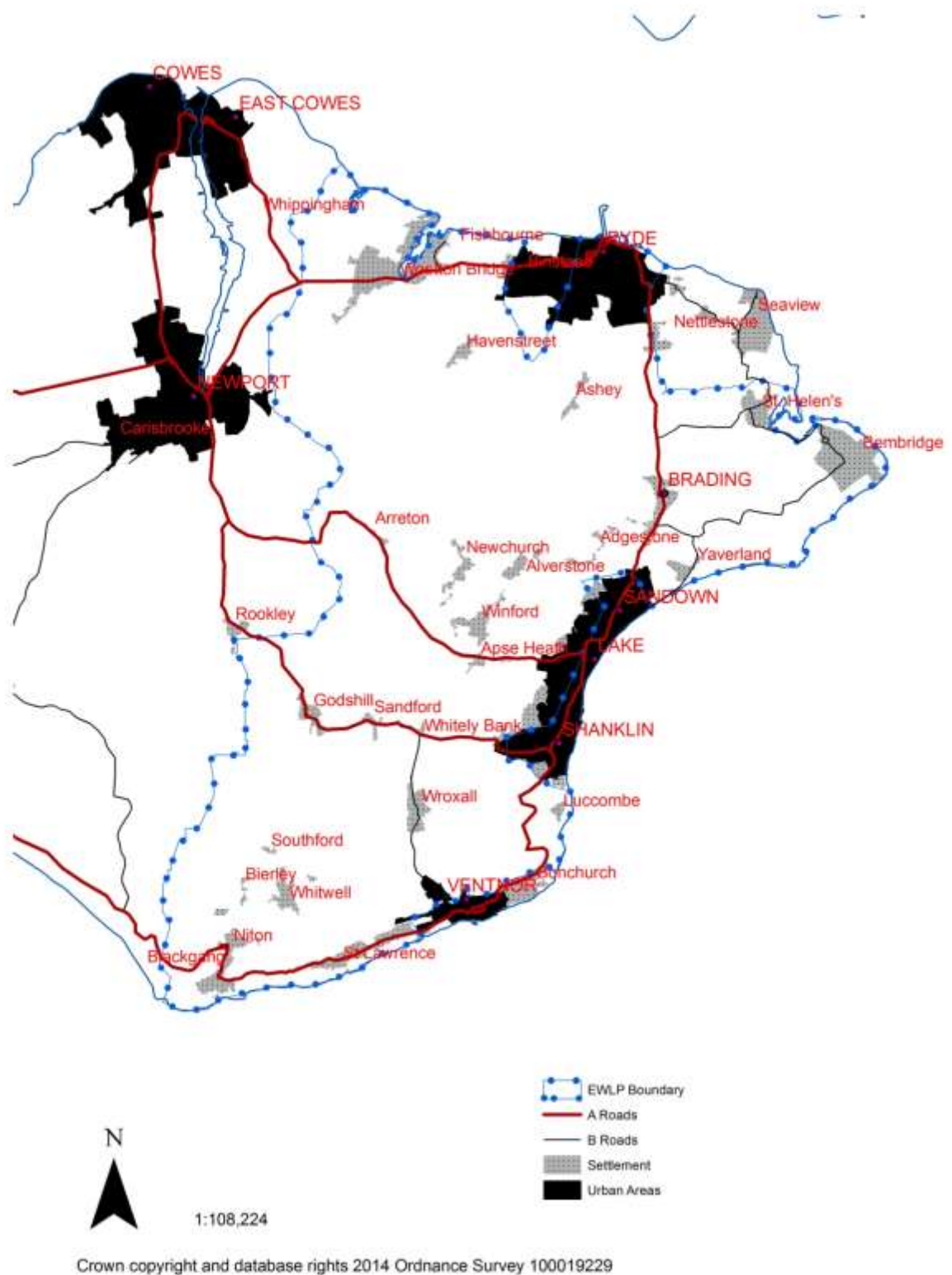


Figure 37: Settlement and Urban areas

<sup>1</sup> McInnes, R. 2014 'Down to the Coast Artscape'

<sup>1</sup> Basford H, V. 2013 'The Isle of Wight in the English Landscape - Medieval and Post-Medieval Rural Settlement and Land Use'

Photographs on back cover:

Top – Panoramic view north from Appuldurcombe Down above Gat Cliff

Middle – Panoramic view south east from Croucher's Cross near Arreton

Bottom – Panoramic view south from Brading Down into Sandown Bay





