



Chailey GBI Settlement Appraisal

Prepared for: Lewes District Council

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Introduction

The settlement appraisal is intended to provide a picture of the existing Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) in and around the settlement boundary and highlight opportunities for improvement.

It is divided into three parts:

Part 1: Local Context - which provides detail of existing local issues and relevant planning policy

Part 2: Current GBI – which examines local GBI from the perspective of the five ‘Why’ Principles of the Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework

Part 3: Audit and analysis - which provides a summary of a selection of audited sites from the settlement and highlights potential opportunities for improvement.

Useful terms:

GBI – Green and Blue Infrastructure

SuDS – Sustainable Drainage Systems

PRoW – Public Rights of Way

SDNP – South Downs National Park

LGS – Local Green Space

NE – Natural England

BNG – Biodiversity Net Gain

LNRS – Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Part 1: Local Context

1 Overview

Chailey is a Parish in the north of Lewes District. The Parish is formed of four main villages including North Chailey, Chailey (also known as Chailey Green), South Street and South Chailey (hereby collectively referred to as ‘the Chailey settlements’). The Chailey settlements are located along the A275 which runs north to south through the Parish, connecting with Lewes approximately 6km south, and the A272 in the north. Being located along the A275 means that each settlement is interlinked for services and facilities.

Although services and facilities are often shared between the Chailey settlements, the landscape and habitats differ from common and woodland to the north to arable farming and woodland to the south (see Part 1, Section 4 Current GBI Assets for more details).

The Chailey settlements have a history of being at the centre of rural industry, specifically agriculture and brickmaking. Today there many farmsteads remain alongside small businesses which operate within and around the settlements, including those focused on tourism.

An extensive network of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) extend throughout the Parish, which also link areas of open space including common and ancient woodland. This includes the ‘Link Walk’ which links North and South Chailey through a circular walk.



Figure 1: Chailey Common

North Chailey

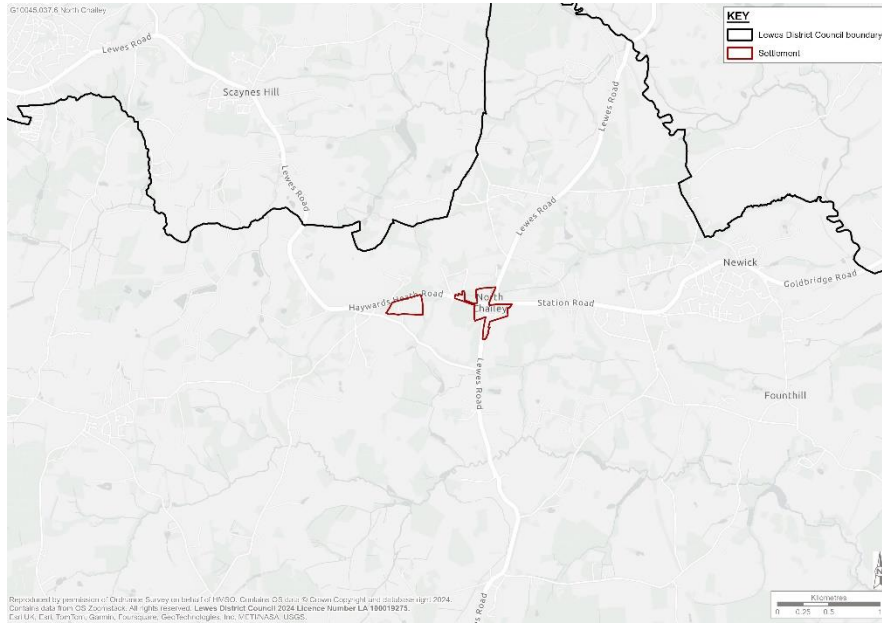


Figure 2: North Chailey Settlement Boundary as defined by Lewes District Local Plan Policies Map 2020

North Chailey (shown in Figure 2) is located to the North of Parish, approximately 1.40km west of Newick, 1.50km north of Chailey and 3.30km northeast of Wivelsfield Green.

North Chailey is classified as a ‘Local Village’ in the Settlement Hierarchy Review (July 2023) as it has very few facilities and services. The services available include St. Mary’s Church, a fuel garage (with shop) and a dental practice. Although there are limited services in North Chailey, it does have good transport links with the A272 running through the centre of the settlement. There is a bus service which provides links to Hayward’s Heath, Newick and Lewes.

There is also a footpath along the A272, but this is narrow and there is no dedicated cycling provision.

The existing residential development is mainly situated along the A272, there are also properties within the St. George’s Conservation Area to the north of the A272. This Conservation Area comprises the Mill House, Chailey Windmill and the converted St. Georges Building, which is now apartments.

The wider area comprises Sussex Weald and Chailey Common which is one of the largest common areas in southern England, and is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Local Nature Reserve (LNR). Chailey Common is managed by Chailey Commons Society.

There are several small businesses which provide employment opportunities within North Chailey such as the Bluebell Business Park, which includes but is not limited to a joiner, tool suppliers and a microbrewery. Chailey Heritage Foundation is also located within North Chailey and is a charity providing education and care services for children and young people with complex neurodiversity needs and disabilities. Some of the businesses set up around the tourism industry include the Heritage Bluebell Railway, Chailey Windmill, Bed & Breakfast establishments and campsites.

Chailey (Chailey Green)



Figure 3: Chailey (Chailey Green) Settlement Boundary as defined by Lewes District Local Plan Policies Map 2020

Chailey, shown in Figure 3 is one of the smallest settlements within the Chailey settlements and is located approximately 1.50km south of North Chailey. In 1976 the village was designated as Chailey Green Conservation Area which includes St. Peter’s Church (built in the 13th Century) and the Five Bells public house (thought to be built in the 16th Century). The pub was historically one of a string of coaching inns on the route between London and Brighton. A green space sits at the village centre and provides an important setting for the historic character of the conservation area.

Chailey is classified as a ‘Service Village’ in the Settlement Hierarchy Review (July 2023) and has a basic level of services, public transport provision and limited employment opportunities. St. Peter’s C of E Primary School, Toddlers Inn Children’s Nursery and Faulkner’s Reading Room (used as the village hall and meeting place) fall in the settlement.

South Street

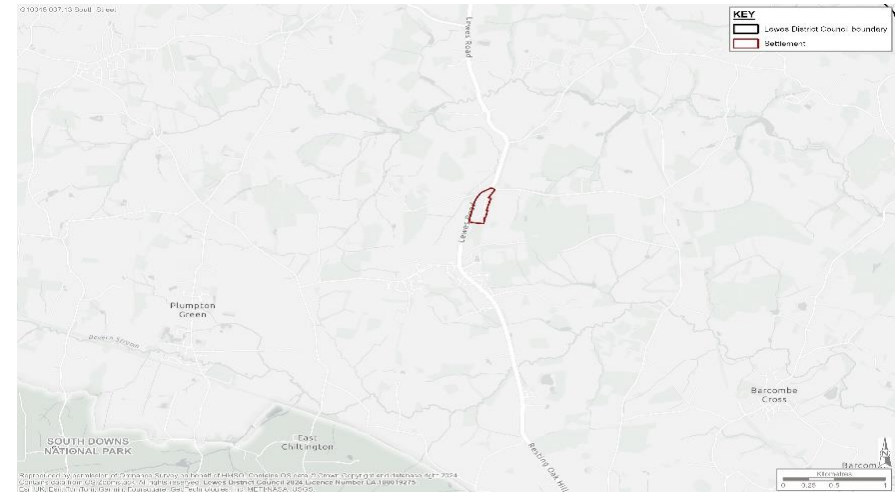


Figure 4: South Street Settlement Boundary as defined by Lewes District Local Plan Policies Map 2020

South Street is a small settlement approximately 526m south of Chailey (Chailey Green) and 265m north of South Chailey.

Similar to Chailey (Chailey Green), South Street is also classified as a ‘Service Village’ in the Settlement Hierarchy Review (July 2023) due to having a basic level of services, public transport provision including one bus stop with services to Newick and limited employment opportunities.

There is a small number of existing residential properties, but no businesses or local services. Residents would need to travel to neighbouring settlements or further afield for services.

South Chailey

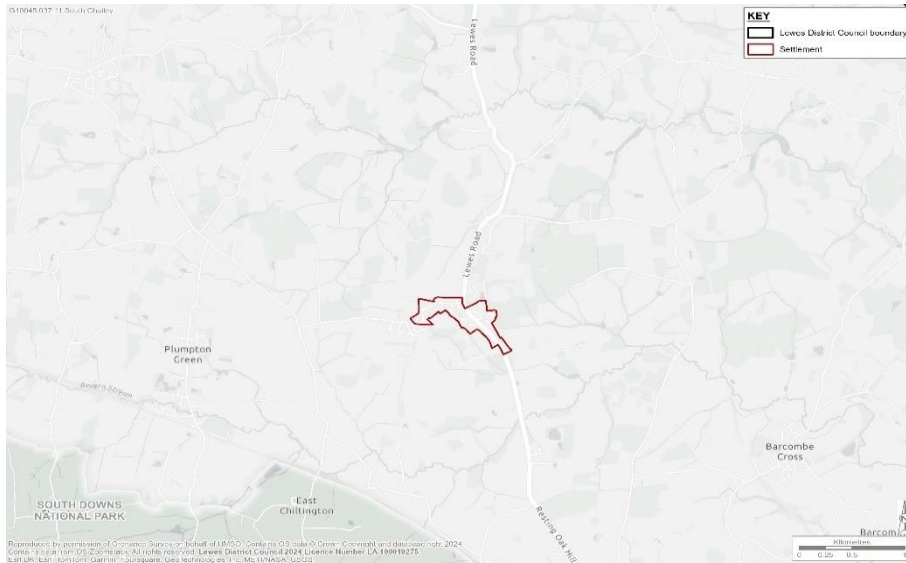


Figure 5: South Chailey Settlement Boundary as defined by Lewes District Local Plan Policies Map 2020

South Chailey (shown in Figure 5) is at the southernmost end of the Parish, approximately 265m south of South Street and 1.64km east of Plumpton Green. The A275 runs through the centre of the village linking South Chailey with the other Chailey settlements and Lewes to the southeast.

South Chailey is classified as a 'Local Village' in the Settlement Hierarchy Review (July 2023) as it has a small number of facilities and services including Chailey Free Church, a GP surgery, Ibstock Brick Manufacturer and Chailey School. Ibstock Brick Manufacturer is a national organisation supplying the construction industry with materials for over 200 years across the UK, and provides employment opportunities for residents.

A bus service provides links to Lewes and Haywards Heath. There is a footpath along the A275 but this is narrow and there is no dedicated cycling provision or crossing points.

There is a network of accessible woodland to the east of South Chailey. The woodland is made up of Kiln Wood, Long Wood and Starvecrow Wood, which link to Markstakes Common approximately 656m to the east of South Chailey.

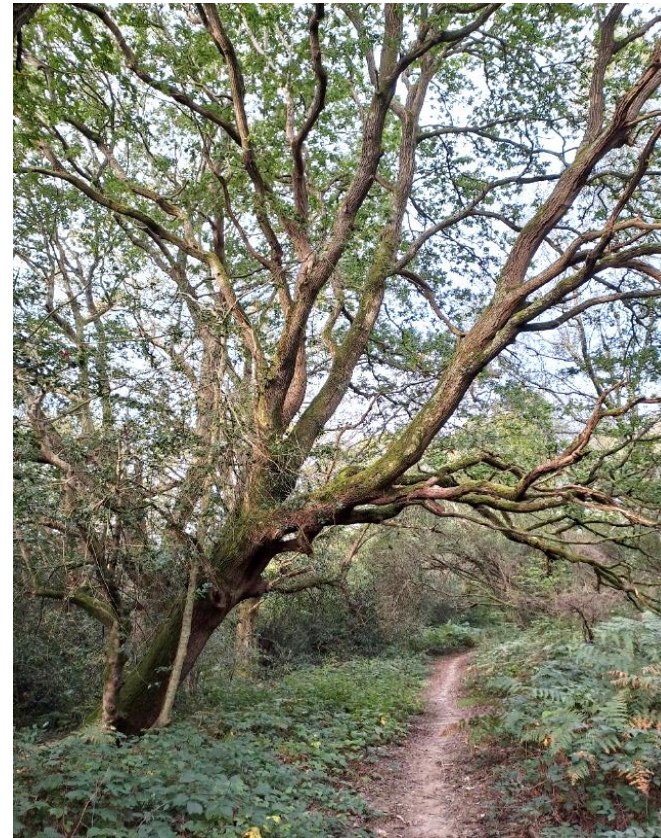


Figure 6: Markstakes Common (South Chailey)

2 Consultation

Chailey Neighbourhood Plan (Chailey NP) undertook consultation in 2016 to 2017. The following key themes were identified:

- Landscape;
- Wildlife Protection;
- Countryside Protection;
- Community Facilities;
- Pedestrian Connections;
- Sustainability; and
- Chailey Common.

Lewes District Council with consultants at TEP undertook consultation in 2023 to support a district-wide the GBI Study. As part of the consultation an interview was undertaken with a representative from Chailey Parish Council.

The Parish Council representative stated that Chailey is a very rural Parish with only 10-15% of the Parish being developed. They also highlighted the important areas of Common, which are not only nationally important but also significant locally as part of the character of the Parish. Funding cuts have reduced the number of rangers who manage and maintain the common areas.

There are concerns about the safety of the A275 which runs through the centre of the Parish. There is very limited use by pedestrians and cyclists due to the narrow pavements.

There is a good network of PRoWs which provide access for residents and visitors to the open countryside, commons and woodland within the Parish. Furthermore, a circular walking route from north to south ‘Link Walk’ was created as an accessible walking route for residents.

The Parish Council noted that properties in Chailey Parish do not tend to suffer from flooding due to the higher elevation and rural landscape.

3 Local GBI Initiatives

There are several local initiatives in and around the Chailey settlements including:

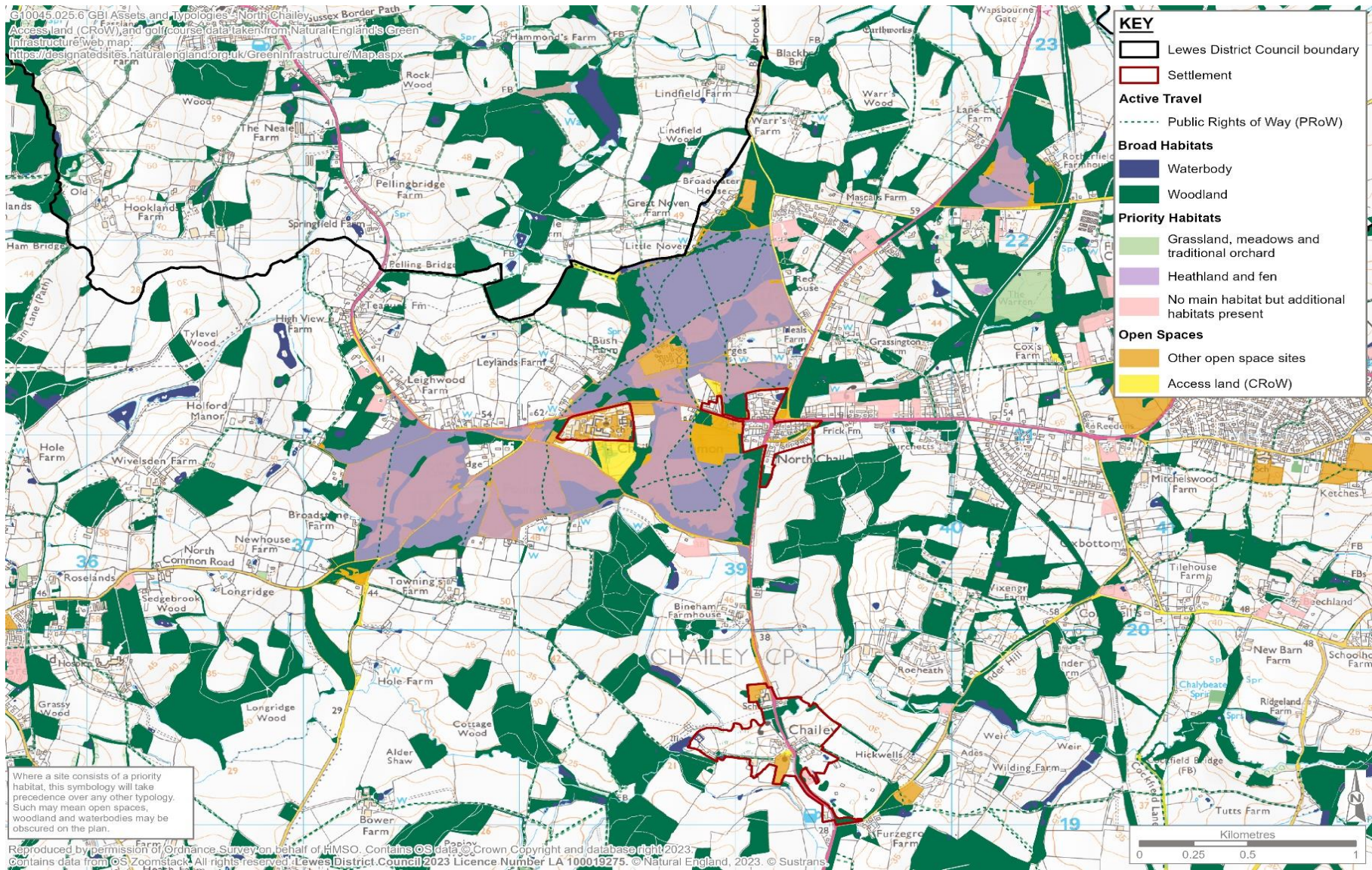
- **Lost Woods of the Low Weald and Downs** – The initiative is a partnership project which aims to bring back to life forgotten areas of woodland in Sussex. Chailey School has worked on the project by creating leaky dams in Chailey Common. The leaky dams, slow the flow of water which increases drought resilience but also reduces flooding downstream in Lewes aligning to GI Framework Principle 4 Improved Water Management and Principle 5 Resilient and Climate Positive Places. The project aims to create an increased variety of habitats which are then better managed for wildlife. This project allows students to learn about local wildlife, local geography and climate adaptation.
- **Chailey Commons Society** – The Society is a local community and conservation society created in 1964 to preserve, maintain and protect the LNR and SSSI. The society based in and around Chailey organise and programme events during the year, including walks and family events on the Commons. The society conserves, protects and enhances natural beauty, wildlife and habitat. It also enhances community cohesion and connections with nature which benefits both physical and mental health. This aligns with GI Framework Principle 1 Nature Rich Beautiful Places and Principle 2 Active and Healthy Places.



- **The Repair Café** – The Repair Café is located within the St. Peter’s Church in Chailey (Chailey Green), and is part of a worldwide movement where volunteer experts repair things free of charge. The Chailey Repair Café has over 37 volunteers and around 160 people attend each month. The Chailey Repair Café aims to “*ensure a sustainable future and increase a circular economy, making sure raw materials are reused again and again*”. The Repair Café brings the community together and links to GI Framework Principle 3 Thriving and Prospering Communities.
- **Chailey Chat** - allows residents to keep up to date with local news and events, or ask for help and advice from other members of the community. This is an important way of connecting residents and tackling loneliness, linking to GI Framework Principle 3 Thriving and Prospering Communities.
- **Chailey Bonfire Society** - provides the village with an annual parade and firework display, which funds a Christmas dinner and entertainment for elderly residents. The Society also runs the St George’s Day Village Fete. These are the most popular village events, attracting residents from all areas of the Parish. This supports GI principle by increasing community cohesion.
- **‘Messy Church’ Chailey Free Church and Chailey Outings Ground** – Provides family activities/ games and organised trips for elderly residents supporting GI Framework Principle 2 Active and Healthy Places by enabling good physical and mental health as well as increase community cohesion. This is particularly important for elderly or those less mobile due to the limited public transport across the Chailey settlements.
- **Chailey Women’s Institute** – Hold several community events annually including ‘Great Chailey Bake Off’ which

supports GI principles such as increasing community cohesion and thriving and prosperous places.

- **Chailey Horticultural Society** – Hold seasonal and special community events. This increases the understanding about the environment on a local level which links to GI Framework Principle 1 Nature Rich Beautiful Places and Principle 3 Thriving and Prospering Communities.
- **Friends of Chailey Windmill** – The community group holds regular open days attracting visitors from the village and further afield. The aim is to raise awareness and preserve the important local building, promoting local history and tourism. This supports GI Framework Principle 3 Thriving and Prospering Communities by promoting tourism.



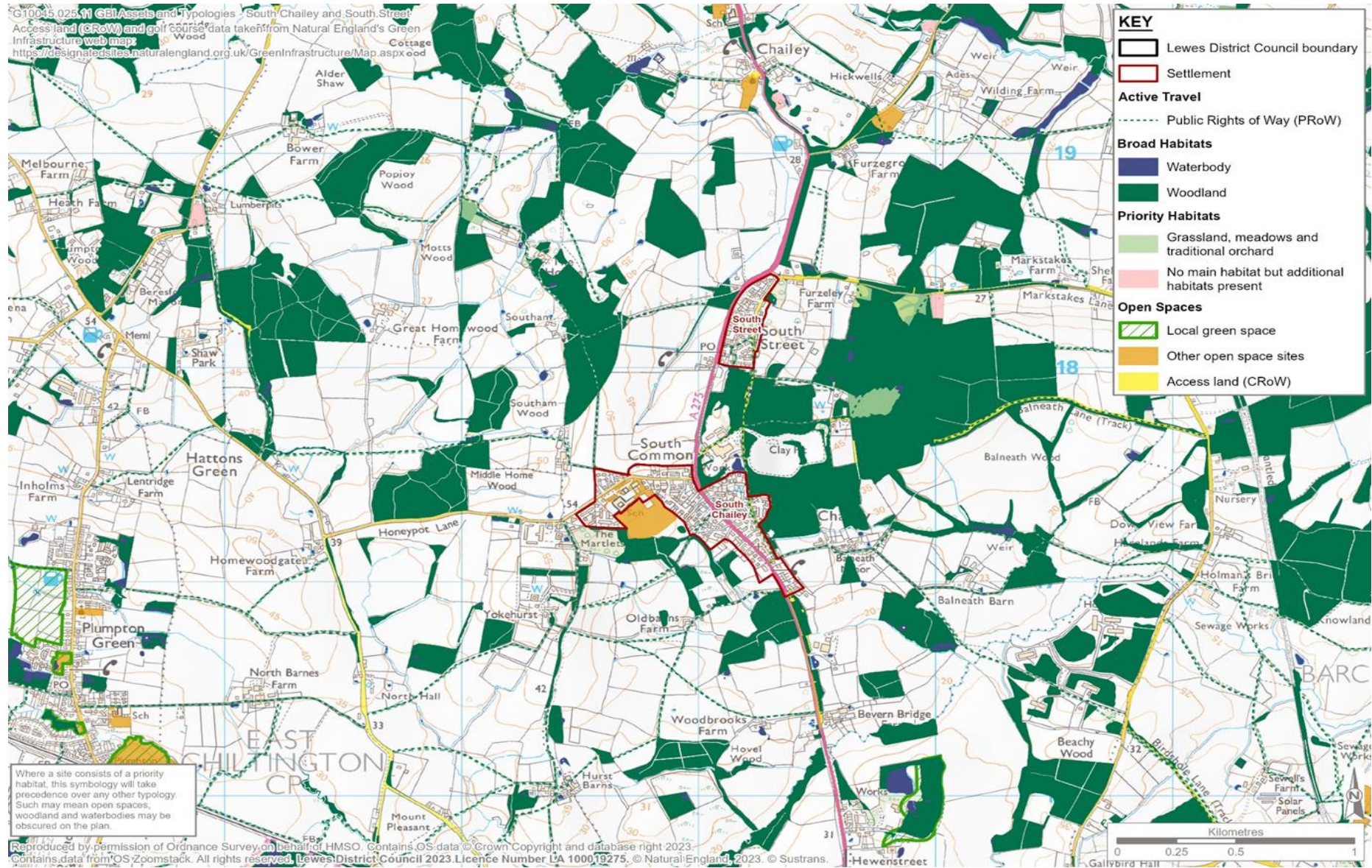


Figure 8: Current GBI Assets – South Street and South Chailey

4 Current GBI Assets

GBI assets in and around the Chailey settlements have been mapped from desk-based assessment and are shown in Figure 7 (North Chailey and Chailey (Chailey Green) and Figure 8 (South Street and South Chaile). There are several existing open spaces within the Chailey settlements, which support a wider network of GBI including designated sites such as Chailey Common, Kiln Wood and Markstakes Common.

4.1 North Chailey and Chailey (Chailey Green)

Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

There are several PRoWs across North Chailey and Chailey (Chailey Green). PRoWs are important routes which provide accessibility for residents and visitors to the open countryside. The PRoW network provides access to Chailey Common as well as walking routes from North Chailey to South Chailey.

Woodland/Waterbody

There are small pockets of woodland within the settlement boundaries of North Chailey and Chailey (Chailey Green), which are adjacent to existing open space and residential development.

There are larger areas of woodland outside of the settlement boundaries which provide important transitional habitat especially on the edge of Chailey Common. Standalone woodlands including Bineham Wood and Beggar's Wood are present to the south of North Chailey and Frick Wood to the south east of North Chailey. These are both ancient woodlands, providing important habitat for birds, bats and small mammals, and which provide important historic and cultural context of the area.

Habitats

Chailey Common comprises mainly of heathland and fen habitats and is designated as Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Local Nature Reserve (LNR) due to its heathland and diverse insect and bird communities. Chailey Common includes Red House Common, Memorial Common, Romany Ridge Common, Pound Common and Lane End.

The areas shown as 'no main habitat' indicate that priority habitats are likely to be present but further surveys are required to establish more detail.

Open Space Sites

Open space within the North Chailey settlement boundary mainly comprises amenity green space around the Heritage Foundation building and on Down View Road. Outside the settlement boundary there are other open spaces including the St. George's Conservation Area and Chailey Sports Ground, which provide links between residential areas and the heathland and fen habitat.

In Chailey (Chailey Green) there is open space within the settlement boundary, including amenity green space around St. Peter's Church and St. Peter's CE Primary School. Outside the Chailey (Chailey Green) settlement boundary there is an additional open space on Cinder Hill (Row Heath), which comprises of amenity greenspace with space for recreation and formal play equipment.

4.2 South Street and South Chailey

Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

There are several PRoWs which provide access from residential areas to designated sites including those listed under 'woodland' below and the open countryside. There is a good network of PRoW and links from North Chailey to South Chailey.

Woodland

There are no areas of woodland within the settlement boundaries of South Street or South Chailey, however there are trees lining the A275 towards Chailey (Chailey Green), which is noted as being important for the character of the Chailey Green Conservation Area.

Large areas of woodland are present outside the settlement boundary to the east of South Chailey and South Street. Kiln Wood & Markstakes Common are classed as ancient woodland and Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI).

Kiln Wood has wide open rides and glimpses into the surrounding Western Low Weald countryside. Ancient woodland species found within Kiln Wood include bluebells, wood anemones and a wild service tree.

Markstakes Common comprises woodland including oak, hornbeam, beech and ash, as well as native woodland ground flora species such as bluebell and wood anemones.

Other Open Space Sites

Open space within the settlement boundary comprises amenity green space around Chailey School in South Chailey. Outside the settlement boundaries there are larger areas including Chailey School Playing Fields which is for private use of Chailey School.

There is further open space within Chailey (Chailey Green) to the north, however access is only available via walking or cycling down the A275 along a narrow footpath with no dedicated cycle route.



Figure 8: Markstakes Common

5 Planning Policy and Strategy Review

A review of existing national, regional and local planning policy, strategies and evidence bases was undertaken as part of the district wide GBI Study and relevant findings are summarised below.

Lewes District Local Plan: Part 1 Core Strategy (2016), states that the Chailey settlements fall within the ‘rural area of Low Weald’ which comprises of fields, mature hedgerow and areas of ancient woodland.

“Although the majority of recent development would have been directed to the urban areas of the district, development that meets the community’s needs for housing, including affordable housing, and supports the rural economy will have been sensitively accommodated, particularly in those settlements with the best range of community services and facilities and ease of access to employment opportunities.

With the London to Lewes railway line passing through this part of the district, further opportunities for sustainable travel, particularly to and from the stations of Plumpton and Cooksbridge will have been realised.

Although travel by the private car will still be, in many instances, the only practical way of accessing and travelling around this part of the district, improvements to road safety, including the lowering of speed limits in the villages, will ensure that this form of transportation is undertaken in the safest possible manner.”

Spatial Policy 2 – Distribution of Housing, identifies that a minimum of 30 net additional units to be built in North Chailey and 10 net additional units to be built in South Chailey. There is no development allocated for Chailey (Chailey Green) or South Street. The Chailey

NP (2019) does not designate sites for housing, so this has been included in the Local Plan: Part 2 Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (2020):

- North Chailey – Glendene, Station Road has been allocated for residential development of 10 net additional dwellings and Layden Hall, East Grinstead Road has been allocated for 6 net additional dwellings. The development of Glendene has been completed, whilst Layden Hall has planning permission it is yet to be delivered.
- South Chailey – One site in South Chailey has been allocated for 10 net additional dwellings. No application for planning permission has been submitted for the site. The allocation policy sets out that designs should retain boundary trees and hedgerow and should be in keeping with the local character of South Chailey.

The Lewes Open Space Strategy (2020) identifies that there is a deficiency across the Chailey settlements in Allotments, Community Gardens and City Farm, Parks and Gardens and Provision for Children and Young People. There is surplus of Amenity Greenspace and Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace, which includes the large areas of Chailey Common in North Chailey.

The council are in the process of drafting a new local plan which will set new housing requirements across the district, allocate development sites and set out up to date policies for new development.

6 Other Local Policies and Guidance

Draft Lewes Infrastructure Delivery Plan (Nov 2023)

The Lewes Infrastructure Delivery Plan (Jan 2023) has been produced to support the Lewes District Local Plan. The IDP sets out the key strategic infrastructure which is required to support the objectives and spatial strategy of the Local Plan and identifies where and at what time that infrastructure is required and who is responsible for delivering it.

Identified in the IDP are walking improvements within Chailey by way of pedestrian crossing improvements.

The Chailey settlements are identified as requiring Outdoor Sports Facilities and Provision for Children and Young People.

Lewes Landscape Character Assessment (May 2023)

The Chailey settlements fall mainly into the ‘Western Low Weald’ character area C, with undulating land and limited drainage. There are also significant areas of ‘Heathland’, character area G, around North Chailey.

Western Low Weald – Wivelsfield, Newick and Chailey Western Low Weald (C1)

The forces for change relevant to GBI at a settlement scale are:

- PRoW networks improved by local volunteers with increased recreational pressures;
- Reduced management resulting in damage to heathland habitat and species; and
- Challenges posed by climate change, including extreme weather events and pressure for renewable development.

As described in the district wide GBI study, the relevant GBI management guidelines set out in the LCA are:

- Preserve the rural character away from development and roads. Plant new woodlands to improve screening and reduce disturbance from roads and overhead lines;
- Maintain semi-enclosed character with available views onto surrounding higher ground;
- Encourage local natural flood management initiatives;
- Support the Code of Conduct and relevant designations on Chailey Common;
- Support heathland restoration through tree removal and grazing;
- Protect and retain existing vegetation, especially ancient woodland; and
- Implement new developments within a robust landscape framework.

Chailey Common Heathland (G1)

The forces for change relevant to GBI at a settlement scale are:

- Increased recreational pressure which may degrade biodiversity and nature value and result in further erosion of the land cover;
- Loss of management resulting in damage to the heathland habitat and species within the commons;
- Climate change resulting increasing extreme weather events, such as flooding due to rainfall patterns changing and heat stress relating to the landscape causing pressure on existing habitats and species;
- Further urbanisation in the surrounding Landscape Character Area resulting in a further decline in tranquillity and impact to key views from elevated parts of the Landscape Character Area; and

- Improvements to the PRoW network by local Sussex voluntary rights of way workers.

As described in the district wide GBI study, the relevant GBI management guidelines set out in the LCA are:

- Support the aims and objectives of relevant designations and Code of Conduct on Chailey Common, including heathland and species management, and ecological designations;
- Support the management programmes associated with each common, including heathland restoration through silver birch removal and grazing;
- Conserve the history of the commons, including ancient cattle and sheep grazing; and
- Continue to preserve and enhance the local PRoW network.

7 Local Priorities

From the desk based evidence including local and neighbourhood planning documents, GIS mapping and consultation, the Chailey settlement's local priorities are:

- To ensure all development, through location, quality and design, preserves and enhances the existing character of the village and its environment;
- To ensure that new residential development in the Parish is sustainably constructed, preferably by smaller houses;
- Builders using local materials, and in a style and appearance in keeping with existing properties within the immediate vicinity;
- To enhance the natural beauty, biodiversity and countryside setting of the Parish, including the vicinity of Chailey Common;
- To enhance the historic environment and cultural heritage of the Parish;

- To take all practical steps to protect views, vistas and the dark sky of the Chailey Parish, particularly where proposed developments outside the Planning Boundary would adversely impact on the character and beauty of the village;
- To strengthen and sustain the community, recreational, tourism and transport infrastructure in the Chailey settlements;
- To facilitate employment opportunities and tourism within the Chailey settlements; and
- To ensure that Chailey community spirit and its facilities are preserved and enhanced.

Local priorities are taken from the Chailey Neighbourhood Plan, but only include priorities relevant to this GBI Study.

Part 2: Current GBI

In 2023 Natural England (NE) published a framework of Green Infrastructure (GI) Principles to guide the planning and implementation of GBI. In this section we consider the settlement in terms of the five ‘Why’ principles at local level.

8 Principle 1: Nature rich beautiful places

“To achieve nature rich and beautiful places at a local level, GI should:

- ***Thread biodiversity through the built environment connecting recreational, natural green and blue spaces;***
- ***Prioritise native species;***
- ***Be designed to connect people to nature; and***
- ***Contribute to site specific BNG requirements”***

The Chailey settlements are within one of the most rural and nature rich area of Lewes District. There are no internationally designated sites in the area but there are several nationally and locally designated sites.

Chailey Common to the north is designated as a SSSI and LNR. The area is dominated by heathers with small colonies of blue flowering Marsh Gentian, Bog Asphodel and Sundew as well as summer displays of Heath-Spotted Orchid. Heather and gorse provide habitat for many birds including the Stonechat, Yellowhammer and Linnet. The Nightjar and Hobby are also regular summer visitors. The

commons are home to native adders and common lizards with small ponds providing habitat for a variety of amphibians.

There are areas of woodland outside of the main settlement areas, which are important habitat for forging, commuting and nesting birds, bats and small mammals. Frick Wood to the southeast of North Chailey is designated as ancient woodland and SNCI with heathland and old pine plantation.

To the east of South Chailey is Kiln Wood which is designated as ancient woodland forming a mosaic of oak, hornbeam, coppice with areas of pine and sweet chestnut. The woodland is used by a forest school (or similar) therefore under-storey ground flora is limited and non-existent in some areas.

Markstakes Common is beyond Kiln Wood and also designated as ancient woodland and SNCI due to the habitat mix of woodland, scrub, bracken, ponds and diverse flora. The understorey is more diverse and richer for wildlife as it is less accessible.

9 Principle 2: Active and healthy places

“To achieve active and healthy places at a local level GI should:

- ***Maximise health and wellbeing outcomes particularly in deprived areas and for disadvantaged groups;***
- ***Address issues of inequality in access to quality natural green space and routes, using the Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (AGS); and***
- ***Be managed to deliver indirect benefits such as urban cooling, noise reduction, flood risk management and air quality improvements which can improve health outcomes.”***

An extensive network of PRowWs extend through the Parish and pass several areas of ancient woodland. To celebrate the Millennium, the villagers of the Chailey settlements developed a ‘Link Walk’ which is a way-marked circular walk linking North and South Chailey. The walk supports active lifestyles and community cohesion whilst benefitting mental and physical health. The walk takes in contrasting habitats including farmland, heathland and ancient woodland with views across Sussex and the neighbouring South Downs National Park (SDNP).

Chailey Common in North Chailey includes large areas of open access land, with parking and walking links to residential areas. Walkers are encouraged to stay on designated routes, which have educational boards at key points explaining various habitats. Dogs are welcome to common areas, but dog owners are asked to clean up after their dogs (multi-purpose bins are provided in all car parks). Dogs are encouraged to be under close control, particularly around livestock and during the bird nesting and breeding season. Horse

riding is also permitted on the commons, however cycling is not permitted.

The Lewes Open Space Strategy (2020) highlighted that there are limited opportunities for play and Outdoor Sports Facilities. All open space in South Chailey or South Street is accessible for residents and visitors, apart from open space associated with schools which is private and not accessible to the public.

North Chailey has the largest amount and variety of open space of the settlements, including Chailey Common, Chailey Sports Ground, open space associated with St. Mary’s Church and areas of amenity greenspace within residential areas. Chailey Sports Ground is used by Chailey Cricket Club and has space for playing football. The open spaces in North Chailey are accessible via car with parking at the Common and Chailey Sports Ground. There are no dedicated cycling routes from other settlements within Chailey Parish and the footpath along the A275 is narrow, which creates barriers to use due to safety concerns.

Between South Street and Chailey (Chailey Green) there is play provision and amenity grassland at Cinder Hill. In Chailey (Chailey Green) there is open space associated with St. Peter’s Church and there is a village green style amenity greenspace. There is very limited access via walking or cycling from South Street and South Chailey to Cinder Hill and the open spaces in Chailey (Chailey Green).

South Chailey has no accessible open space within the settlement boundary but there is access via a PRowW to Kiln Wood & Markstakes Common to the east. Kiln Wood is used for den building and outdoor learning but has no signage into the Wood and poor entrance points (see Part 3 Audit and Analysis).

10 Principle 3: Thriving and prosperous places

“To achieve thriving and prosperous communities at a local level GI should:

- **Integrate services such as air quality regulation, flood risk management, noise mitigation, recreation, urban cooling, and pollination into development based on local needs;**
- **Use early collaboration with adjacent local authorities, other developers, landowners, or infrastructure providers to create opportunities for jointly funded GI; and**
- **Link to skills development, training and jobs by local employers, contractors, and training institutions”**

The Chailey NP (2019) states that the area is perceived to have poor job opportunities, poor leisure facilities and shops. It is difficult to maintain strong community spirit because of the extremely dispersed location of the villages and the absence of a recognisable village hub.

Tourism has become a significant industry in the Chailey settlements, fuelled by tourist attractions such as the Bluebell Railway, an 11-mile long heritage steam trainline which take in Sussex scenery, campsites such as the Tomkins Farm, Earth Camp, and The Secret Campsite, which provide family camping facilities along with shepherd huts and yurts. Several other holidays lets and B&B’s are now in operation in the area. This contributes to making Chailey a thriving and prosperous place, providing employment opportunities and supporting the local economy and regeneration.

There are several clubs and community groups (see 3. Local GBI Initiatives above) which bring people together from across the

Chailey settlements and organise community events and activities. There is also a space in Chailey (Chailey Green) which acts as a village hall and meeting place for residents, however this is limited due to size and accessibility.

There are limited cycling opportunities connecting the Chailey settlements, but there is a narrow footpath along the A275 which links all the settlements. A bus service provides links from the Chailey settlements to the wider area to access services, facilities and employment opportunities.



Figure 9: Chailey Common educational signage

“To achieve sustainable water management at a local level GI should:

- ***Provide sustainable water management including though sustainable drainage systems (SuDS);***
- ***Be adaptable to take account of the impacts of climate change;***
- ***Reduce site specific flood risks identified in flood risk assessments;***
- ***Improve water quality and help address existing sources of pollution;***
- ***Improve natural filtration where this will protect and enhance groundwater supplies;***
- ***Help connect recreational, natural green and blue spaces and provide opportunities for everyone to safely experience blue space;***
- ***Use water to enhance public open space for a variety of recreational uses, ensuring potential conflicts are managed;***
- ***Create and enhance habitats including re-naturalising river corridors and providing riparian buffer zones;***
- ***Soften estuary edges with coastal habitats that can act as buffers to coastal erosion and tidal flooding; and***
- ***Prioritise native species and ensure biosecurity principles are adhered to avoid spreading non-native invasive species and diseases.”***

11 Principle 4: Improved water management

There are small, isolated waterbodies and watercourses throughout the Parish, mainly outside of the settlement boundaries within countryside areas. There are no known flood risk or water quality issues within the Chailey Parish or Chailey settlements.

There are also no objectives or policies for improved water management included in the Chailey NP (2019). However, there is a commitment to protect and retain well-established features including watercourses and ponds, which provide important habitats.

12 Principle 5: Resilient and climate positive places

“To achieve resilient and climate positive places at a local level GI should:

- ***Be audited using local information for instance using local resilience strategies and plans to improve the climate resilience of existing GI***
- ***Incorporate adaptive management to ensure GI is planned to provide multi-functional benefits and continues to do so as the climate changes”***

Proposals for individual and community scale utilities and services including reliable electricity, hydroelectricity, solar photovoltaic panels and clean water are encouraged through Policy EC04 Sustainability in the Chailey NP (2019).

Part 3: Audit and Analysis

13 GBI Site Audits

Site audits were undertaken in October 2023 to provide an indication of how local green and blue spaces are performing. The exercise is not intended as a comprehensive review of all GBI in the settlements as only a limited number of sites could be audited across the district. However, the audit methodology and scoresheets can be used by an open space practitioner to evaluate other green spaces and draw up improvement plans in the future if required. GBI assets were chosen in each settlement from existing GIS mapping data to cover a range of different uses and GBI services for people and nature.

Audits assessed the current contribution of green space to the five “Why” principles of good GBI. The audit covered “Quality and Value” using a system derived from best practice methods associated with the Green Flag Award criteria¹, adapted to include additional criteria relevant to GBI.

The scores awarded in each category are classed from X to 4 outlined below:

- X - not appropriate;
- 0 - missing but needed;
- 1 - complete re-designed needed;
- 2 - major improvement needed;
- 3 - minor improvement needed; and
- 4 - no improvement needed.

¹ [Green Flag Award - Green Flag Award](#)

The audit also covered criteria of multifunctionality, connectivity, variety and distinctiveness, which are relevant to the NE “What” principles of good GBI.

Five GBI assets were identified for the Chailey settlements. All assets were accessible and had a full audit undertaken.

Site Audit Map

The site audit map shown in Figure 10 shows the settlement boundary of North Chailey and Chailey (Chailey Green) and Figure 11 shows the settlement boundary of South Street and South Chailey.

A total of 5 GBI sites were audited, all of which were publicly accessible. Audit scores and further details are provided below.

Table 1 shows the Quality and Value scores from the site audits. Scores from site visits are based on a snapshot in time and should be considered in the context of local knowledge and other more detailed surveys where those are available.

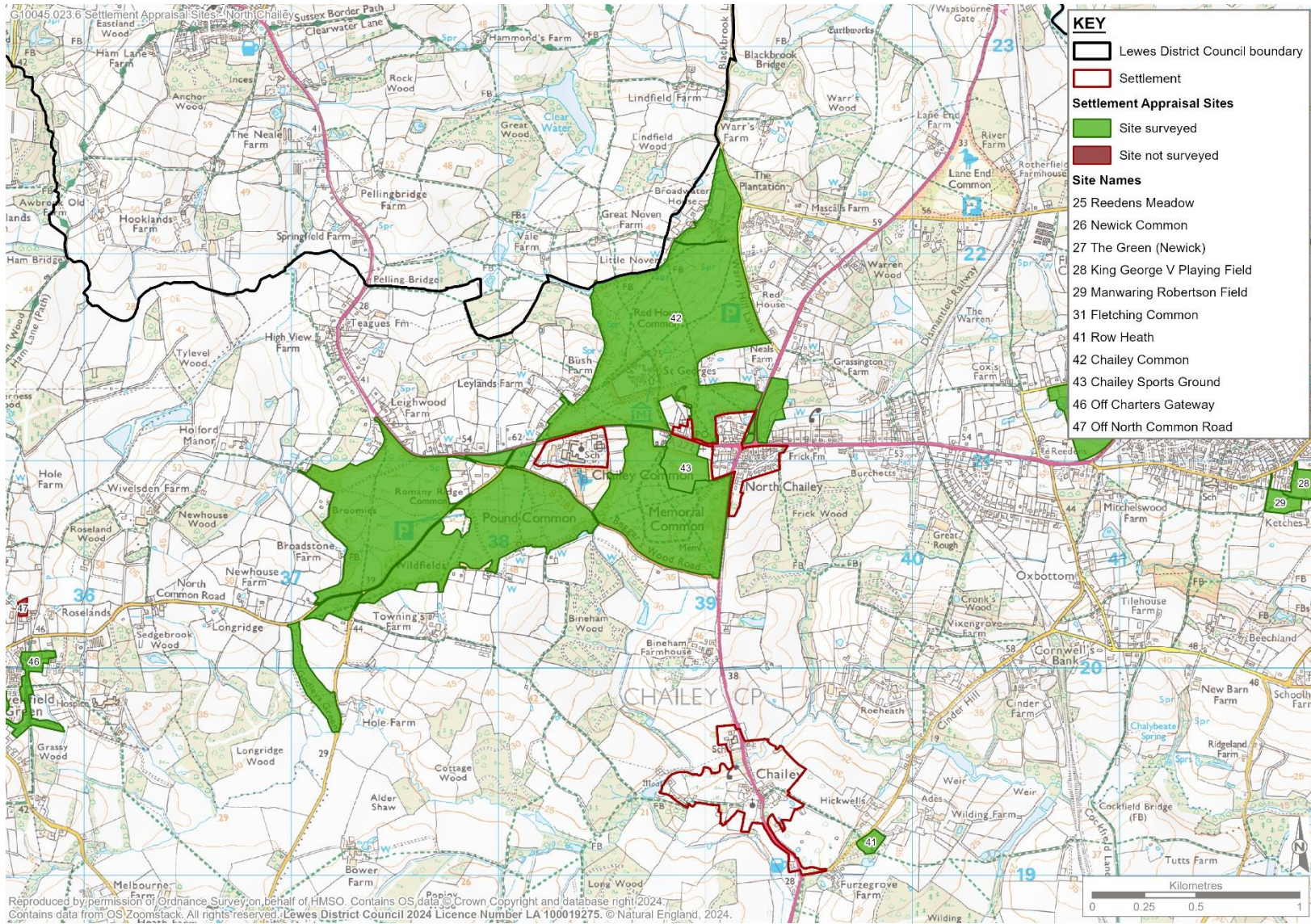


Figure 10: Site Audit Map – North Chailey and Chailey (Chailey Green)

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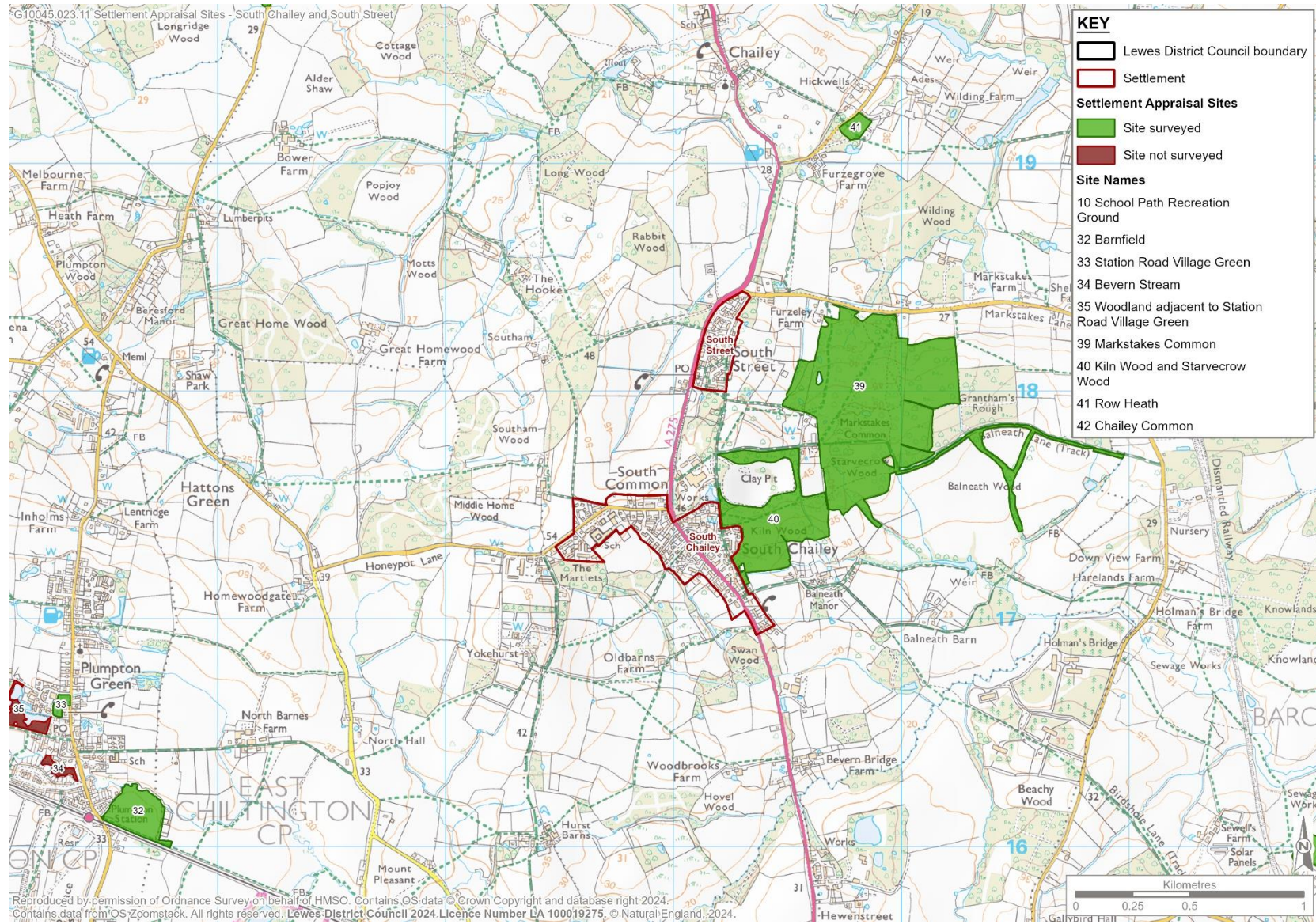


Figure 11: Site Audit Map – South Street and South Chailey

		South Street & South Chailey	South Street & South Chailey	North Chailey and Chailey (Chailey Green)	North Chailey and Chailey (Chailey Green)	North Chailey and Chailey (Chailey Green)
Criteria	GI Principles	39. Markstakes Common	40. Kiln Wood and Starve crow Wood	41. Row Heath	42. Chailey Common	43. Chailey Sports Ground
Social Criteria – Appropriately welcoming / Accessible to all	1,2,3	1	0	1	3	3
Social Criteria – Healthy, safe and secure	2,3	3	2	1	3	4
Social Criteria – Well maintained and clean	2,3	4	3	4	4	4
Social Criteria – Contribution to local amenity, vitality and sense of place	2,3	2	2	2	3	4
Social Criteria – Recreation, play and exercise value	2	3	3	4	4	4
Environmental Criteria – Diversity and Naturalness of Habitats	1	4	2	3	3	4
Environmental Criteria – Site Management and Habitat Diversity supports pollinators and soil invertebrate diversity	1	4	2	3	4	3
Environmental Criteria – Shade and Ventilation available to users	5	4	4	4	4	4
Environmental Criteria – Vegetation, land surface cover contributes to natural flood management	1,4,5	4	3	3	4	4

		South Street & South Chailey	South Street & South Chailey	North Chailey and Chailey (Chailey Green)	North Chailey and Chailey (Chailey Green)	North Chailey and Chailey (Chailey Green)
Criteria	GI Principles	39. Markstakes Common	40. Kiln Wood and Starve crow Wood	41. Row Heath	42. Chailey Common	43. Chailey Sports Ground
Environmental Criteria – SuDS or water quality management features visible and effective	4.5	4	3	2	4	2
Total Score	N/A	33	24	27	36	36
Potential Score	N/A	40	40	40	40	40

Table 1 Audit Scores

13.1 GBI Audit Scores

Two sites audited scored under 30 (Kiln Wood & Starve Crow Wood and Row Heath), both sites scored low in 'appropriately welcoming/ accessible to all' due to barriers to accessibility and no signage. The only access to Row Heath was via a road with no pavement and Kiln Wood has poor signage at entrance points and limited natural surveillance from within the site. Markstakes Common and Chailey Common had limited accessibility but had an excellent range of habitats and way-marking routes within the sites.

Markstakes Common - 33/40

Markstakes Common has an overall score of 33 but has individual scores from 1-4, with ecological and environmental services criteria scoring the highest marks (4) due to the variety of quality habitats, shade/ventilation and contribution to water management. Markstakes Common scored lower for signage and sense of place due to poor/no signage, wayfinding, footpaths and natural surveillance.

Kiln Wood and Starvecrow Wood – 24/40

Kiln Wood and Starvecrow Wood is an accessible woodland to the east of South Chailey. The Wood scored the lowest of the all the GBI assets audited. The lowest scores were for signage, healthy/safe/secure and sense of place. This is due to no signage and limited wayfinding in the Wood, and no natural surveillance which can create barriers to use.

Row Heath – 27/40

Row Heath is an amenity greenspace with play provision on Cinder Hill between South Street and Chailey (Chailey Green). Row Heath had a mix of scores between 1-4, highest scores included 'well maintained and clean', 'recreation, play and exercise value' and 'shade and ventilation available to users'. The lowest scores included 'appropriately welcoming / accessible to all' and 'Healthy, safe and secure', which is mainly due to the site having no signage and very limited accessibility. There is no footpath from South Street or Chailey (Chailey Green) and no safe car parking.

Chailey Common – 36/40

Chailey Common situated around North Chailey scored highest out of the GBI assets audited along with Chailey Sports Ground which is adjacent to Chailey Common. The site scored 3 or 4 in all criteria, with the highest scores for being 'well maintained and clean', 'recreation, play and exercise value' and all ecosystem and environmental services criteria including habitat diversity, shade/ventilation, flood management.

Chailey Sports Ground – 36/40

Chailey Sports Ground is situated in North Chailey and scored highest out of the GBI assets audited along with Chailey Common which is adjacent to Chailey Sports Ground. The site scored 3 or 4 in all criteria apart from SuDS/water quality. Some improvements could be made to include better signage and habitat diversity.

13.2 Multifunctionality

Multifunctionality (delivering multiple functions from the same area of GBI) is especially important in area where provision of GBI is poor or scarce. GBI should deliver a range of functions and benefits for people, nature and place.

The five audited sites were assessed for their multifunctionality:

- **Markstakes Common** – There is a variety of multifunctional features including areas for recreation (bridleway and footpaths), flood management and habitat restoration. However, access to the recreational routes has limited signage and wayfinding as well as poor quality footpath surfaces.
- **Kiln Wood and Starvecrow Wood** – Good multifunctionality including recreation (footpaths and bridleways) and some woodland habitats. However, access to the Wood and recreational routes isn't clear and there is only limited signage and wayfinding as well as poor quality footpath surfaces.
- **Row Heath** – Functionality is mainly limited to recreation (playing field) and a play area. There are limited habitats which comprise mainly of mature hedgerow and amenity grassland.
- **Chailey Common** – Good multifunctionality due a wide network of PRoW for walking, cycling and horse riding, which is facilitated by good car parking, signage and wayfinding. The Common also offers a range of habitats, deadwood habitats for insects and ditches for water retention.
Chailey Sports Ground – The primary use is for recreation (playing fields) but there are also access points to walking routes into Chailey Common. There is also a range of habitats bordering the site, including trees, scrub and bracken.

13.3 Connectivity – to SDNP, Coast and other GI Assets

GBI should function and connect with the living network for both people and nature at all scales (e.g., within sites, and across regions and within a national scale). It should enhance ecological networks and support a variety of ecosystem services, connecting provision of GBI with those who need its benefits.

Five sites were assessed for their connectivity to the SDNP, the Coast and other GBI assets:

- **Markstakes Common** – The Common is not connected to the coast or SDNP. However, there are some links via the PRoW network to other GBI assets including Long Wood, Kin Wood and Starvecrow Wood and the open countryside.
- **Kiln Wood Starvecrow Wood** – The Wood is not connected to the coast or SDNP. However, there are some links via PRoW to other GBI assets including Long Wood, Markstakes Common LWS and the open countryside.
- **Row Heath** – Row Heath is not connected to the coast or SDNP. However, it is connected to the open countryside to the south and Chailey (Chailey Green) to north via PRoW.
- **Chailey Common** – The Common is not connected to the coast or SDNP. However, the Common provides links to the playing fields in Chailey Sports Ground and has viewpoints towards High Weald National Landscape to the north.
- **Chailey Sports Ground** – The Chailey Sports Ground is not connected to the coast or SDNP. However, there are links to Chailey Common via the PRoW network.

13.4 Variety and Distinctiveness

GBI should consist of a variety of types and sizes of green and blue spaces, green routes and environmental features (as part of a network) that can provide a range of different functions, benefits and solutions to address specific issues and needs.

Five sites were assessed for their variety and distinctiveness:

- **Markstakes Common** – Has a variety of habitats and is distinctive as a good mature woodland with trees, woodland ground flora, wet ditches and a waterbody. The entrance to the woodland is not obvious and is accessed from Kiln Wood Starvecrow Wood to the south.
- **Kiln Wood Starvecrow Wood** – There is a limited variety of habitats due to recreational activities. Den building was noted during the site audit, which is limiting the understorey habitat but is valuable for play and recreation. There should be a balance between recreation and nature conservation.
- **Row Heath** – There is a limited variety of habitats due to the primary use being recreation and play. Accessibility is limited by lack of footpaths to the open space and distance from the main settlement area.
- **Chailey Common** – There is a variety of habitats and recreation opportunities. The Common is very distinctive due to areas of heathland and open areas with a range of opportunities for wildlife such as trees and scrub.
- **Chailey Sports Ground** – There are a variety of habitats along the boundaries of the site, where the Chailey Sports Ground meets Chailey Common. However, variety is limited elsewhere due to primary use as a playing field.

13.5 Capacity to accommodate change

The Chailey settlements are expected to accommodate an increasing population both locally and from further afield (section 5), which will then increase demand for green space for social use. The first five audit scores indicate how well a site is performing for people, with a maximum score of 20.

All GBI assets will also need to adapt to inevitable consequences of climate change and provide as many environmental services as possible (like temperature regulation and water management) to best serve local communities. The final five audit scores indicate how resilient a site is to the effects of climate change, with a maximum score of 20.

- **Markstakes Common** – Markstakes Common scored mixed results for social criteria due to limited accessibility, signage and sense of place. However, due to the good range of habitats the environmental criteria scored a maximum of 20. The Common is a sensitive habitat and therefore change should be managed to balance amenity use and habitat protection and enhancement.
- **Kiln Wood Starvecrow Wood** - Kiln Wood Starvecrow Wood scored 10/20 for social criteria due to limited accessibility, especially at entrance points and limited sense of place. However, score higher for environmental criteria due to the woodland habitat and water management opportunities. The Wood has potential to accommodate change with consideration to signage and wayfinding. The woodland habitat and amenity use should be balanced to ensure habitats aren't degraded with population increase or climate change.

- **Row Heath** – Row Heath scored 12/20 for social criteria with higher scores for being well maintained and range of recreational and play uses. The environmental criteria scores 15/20 with highest scores for shade and ventilation but lower scores for SuDS/water management. Row Heath has limited accessibility currently but if this was improved it could increase capacity for future change.
- **Chailey Common** – Chailey Common scores 17/20 for social criteria due to being well maintained and having a range of recreational opportunities. The environmental criteria scores 19/20 due to having a good range of habitats and some water management. The Common already accommodates many visitors daily due to a good network of footpaths, bridleways and signage. Any future population growth should manage the Common to balance recreation with sensitive heathland habitats.
- **Chailey Sports Ground** – The Chailey Sports Ground scores 19/20 for social criteria because of the range of recreational opportunities including playing fields and walking routes. The environmental criteria score is 17/20 due to having a range of habitats on the boundaries of the site and some contribution to SuDS. This site is managing use by the current population very well and is not expected to degrade excessively with extra footfall as long as current management is maintained accordingly.

14 Summary of GBI Opportunities for Chailey

The evidence base, consultation and site audit results have been analysed and a summary of specific place-based opportunities is presented below following the five themes of the NE 'How' Principles which guide the delivery of GBI at a local level. A next step would be discussion with local experts and community leaders to further define and prioritise any detailed actions to take forward.

Partnership

Local residents and stakeholders should be at the centre of the planning and design process, and well informed about risks, trade-offs and what can realistically be achieved.

Encourage and support Chailey Parish Council, community clubs and initiatives that explore and protect local wildlife according to local demand. Help existing grassroots wildlife groups and projects (like Lost Woods of the Low Weald, Chailey Commons Society and Chailey Horticultural Society) to connect to regional initiatives that actively contribute to wider scale nature recovery projects and benefit from relevant funding. Social initiatives such as the Repair Café, Chailey Chat, Messy Church, Chailey Women's Institute and Friends of Chailey Windmill also contribute to Chailey's thriving community and therefore should also be encouraged through partnership.

Explore opportunities to enhance GBI assets like Row Heath and Chailey Sports Ground for habitat variety where appropriate. Tourism opportunities and rural business should also be supported to encourage and promote a thriving community. Tourism can be promoted through enhanced signage and wayfinding to the ProW network which links GBI assets with communities and the open countryside.

Evidence

Examine and collect information on the condition and usage of the PRoWs and signage to these routes, especially where they link the Chailey settlement's GBI assets or the open countryside. This evidence base would provide an opportunity to improve accessibility for residents and visitors, therefore encourage active and healthy lives but also improve the tourism offering for the Chailey settlements.

Policy & Strategic Planning

Continue to protect and enhance existing GBI assets through local and neighbourhood policies to ensure protection for open space long term. Develop a plan to increase Allotments, Community Gardens and City Farm, Parks and Gardens and Provision for Children and Young People to address the existing open space deficiencies. This could include new provision at appropriate locations associated with new development if it occurs.

Consideration should also be given to create new and safer walking and cycling routes along the A275 which links each of the settlements together, but is currently providing limited connectivity for residents apart from via car use.

Design

Investigate opportunities for habitat variety wherever possible to improve climate resilience and reverse biodiversity decline. New development should consider GBI on-site and how it links into existing GBI from the early stages of the design process.

Management

Enhance habitats wherever possible to encourage a variety of habitats and increase pollinating native species including Row Heath

and Chailey Sport Ground but also promote ground flora within woodland such as Kiln Wood Starvecrow Wood. GBI assets that are currently managed well such as Chailey Common, should be used as best practice to guide management on other GBI assets.

Summary list:

- Enhance GBI assets where appropriate for variety of habitats and accessibility;
- Encourage and support Chailey Parish Council, community clubs and initiatives that explore and protect local wildlife according to local demand;
- Review accessibility to PRoW network from GBI assets to understand the quality of footpaths, barriers to accessibility;
- Enhance and protect the existing open space network which provide GBI connectivity;
- Promote safer walking and cycling routes along the A275, which links each of the Chailey settlements;
- Provide on-site GBI provision in new housing development (where possible). If this is not possible a contribution should be made through planning obligations to support the enhancement of GBI across the Chailey settlements; and
- GBI assets that are currently managed well for habitats and recreation should be used as best practice guidance and knowledge sharing for other GBI assets.

Chailey GBI Settlement Appraisal

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Author	Valerie Jennings
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Checked	Rebecca Martin
Approved	Rebecca Martin

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