

Countryside and Environment
Working Group

Upper Clatford Parish Council

Neighbourhood
Development Plan –
Evidence Document

Landscape Character

UC8 – Landscape Character

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UC8 Landscape Character¹

UC 8.1 Introduction

The name of 'Upclatford' was first recorded in 1306² as the old English translation of 'Clat(e)ford', a ford where burdock grows. The fords are long gone but the village, with its newer neighbours Anna Valley and Red Rice, remains an historic riverside settlement sited against the backdrop of an Iron Age hill fort, Bury Hill, which continues to dominate the landscape today. To complement policy E2 of the Local Plan, this chapter will describe the character of our parish and identify local features of importance.

UC 8.2 Community Evidence

Analysis of our community NDP survey shows that 94% of residents rated our Conservation Area and Listed Buildings as being highly/fairly important. The same percentage similarly rated the way in which our rivers flow through the settlements.

Residents attach great value to our rural atmosphere (92%), considered quiet (92%) despite the proximity of Andover and major roads. 39 comments were submitted³.

The message delivered by residents is clear and unambiguous.

Our settlements are seen as quiet and rural in nature with unique and independent characters that enrich our parish with a singular sense of community. Our listed buildings, conservation area, heritage and landscape contribute to this sense of identity.

UC 8.3 Parish landscape character

The Test Valley Landscape Character Assessment⁴ designates our location as within the Pillhill Brook Valley Floor, Upper and Lower River Anton Valley Floors, Amport Wooded Downs, Andover Chalk Downland and Thruxton & Danebury Chalk Downland⁵. Although these LCAs are in close proximity to Andover, the Parish has a strong sense of a rural character which is very separate from Andover's urban character.

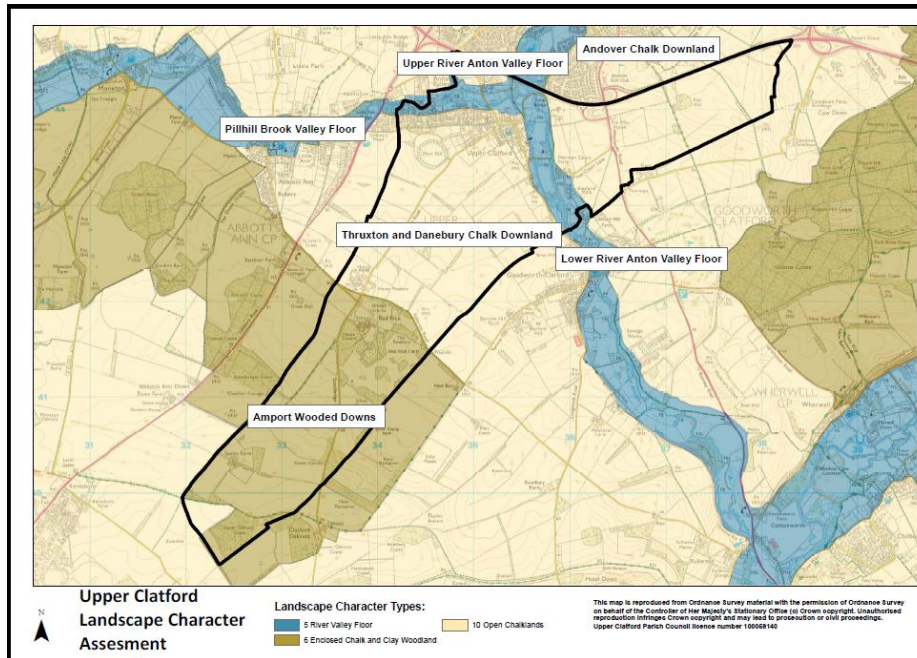
¹ All photographs have been taken by John Baxter and Rob Hall who have granted permission to use them in the NDP

² <https://www.testvalley.gov.uk/assets/attach/2824/The-Clatfords-Character-Appraisal.pdf> page 6

³ www.upperclatford.com, Upper Clatford NDP Feedback Document

⁴ updated 2nd April 2019 <https://testvalley.gov.uk/planning-and-building/treesandlandscape/landscape-characterassessment>

⁵ LCA designations LCT 5H, 5I, 5J, 6E, 10F and 10C.



Map 1: Upper Clatford Landscape Character Assessment

UC 8.4 Riverside

The current settlement area exists predominantly with the Pillhill Brook Valley Floor LCA. This is a characteristically flat low-lying area that meanders through a relatively narrow valley strongly enclosed by gentle but well-defined chalk sides with numerous villages and hamlets, before joining the River Anton at Upper Clatford.

The River Valley Floor is typically pastoral bordering the river, often with wet swampy areas. There are frequent copses dominated by Willow, Poplar and Alder and often riverbanks are fringed by standard trees.



Photo 1: Example of the bank on a chalk stream tributary of the Anton above the bridge on Church Lane (see map)

These habitats are published on DEFRA's Magic Map application⁶. Riverside 'Deciduous Woodland' priority habitat is shown marked green. Deciduous woodland accounts for 39% of total priority habitats resource in England, the largest proportion of any habitat group⁷.

Map 2: Riverside Deciduous Woodland habitat examples in Water meadows

UC 8.5 Water meadows

An aerial photograph showing a large, open green field, possibly a park or sports ground. The field is surrounded by a dense line of trees, some of which are showing autumnal colors. In the background, a residential area with houses and a road is visible under a cloudy sky.

Photo 2: Aerial view across the Upper Clatford settlement from over the water meadows

⁷ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/

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Proposal: *Development bordering these sensitive areas should seek to prevent further loss and fragmentation of water meadows as a result of inclusion within garden curtilages.*

UC 8.6 Watercress beds.

There are numerous current and disused watercress beds, particularly within Anna Valley, and it may be that this form of water management during the 18th and 19th centuries replaced water meadows as the dominant form of agricultural land use. The commercial production of watercress with infrastructure and facilities that do not erode the quiet simple landscape character of the river valley should be encouraged.

Proposal: *As a local feature of ecological value, watercress beds should not be adversely affected by development, whether adjacent or further upstream. Former watercress beds comprise part of the Local Gap and potential exists for increasing biodiversity through sensitive land management.*

UC 8.7 Hedgerows

Hedgerows⁹ are listed as a priority habitat in the UK Biodiversity Action 8 Plan (BAP). Over 130 BAP floral and faunal species can be found, including the local historically important burdock, showing their importance for supporting biodiversity. Although preferable to unnatural structures which could provide similar screening services¹⁰, half of all hedgerows were lost from 1940-1970 due to agricultural intensification. More recently destabilisation due to Dutch Elm disease and Ash dieback, which affect two of their most abundant tree species¹¹, has occurred. 'Hampshire Landscape: strategy for the future'¹² encourages the protection and restoration of hedgerows in order to preserve landscape character and diversity. Additionally, hedgerows contribute to flood management and reduce pollution of watercourses; they also reduce the spread of bovine Tuberculosis, a disease which is predicted to cost £1 billion over the next 10 years.

Threats to hedgerows exist through solar farm installations, equestrian facilities and alteration or erection of farm buildings.

Proposal: *Future development or changes of land use should aim to maintain hedgerow field boundaries. Where possible hedgerows should be restored and replanting of former hedgerow lines encouraged with local native species. Traditional methods of hedgerow management should be encouraged.*

⁹ Defined as any boundary line of trees or shrubs over 20m long and less than 5m wide (Bickmore, 2002)

¹⁰ Baudry et al., 2000

¹¹ Wood wise, 2014

¹² HCC, 2007



Within the settlement boundary, hedging is commonplace. As preserving the character of the parish is so highly valued by residents, hedgerows are preferable to unnatural structures which could provide similar screening services, but which urbanise the area.

Photo 3: Example of hedging around boundaries

Proposal: proactively seek opportunities to mitigate impact from existing and future development through new hedgerow planting

UC 8.8 Bury Hill Fort

Shown below from within, Bury Hill fort is a scheduled monument and a distinct feature of the local landscape.



Photo 4: Bury Hill Fort (above) and view from Anna Valley of rising land (below) to Bury Ring



Terrain rises sharply to the south of the settlement; this created an ideal location for the Iron Age fort as well as a natural barrier to development in recent times. It is important to maintain and enhance the surviving Hill Fort while protecting earthworks from visitor erosion¹³.

Proposal: Retaining and enhancing the contrast of the settlement with the adjacent chalk valley sides should be considered in the context of development, particularly towards the southern settlement boundary within Anna Valley.

UC 8.9 Trees

Trees create a particularly special environment within and around the villages. Tree lines soften the perimeter of the village blending it with the surrounding farmland and they should be maintained¹⁴. A resident commented that “greenery is very important”.

¹³ Upper Clatford Parish Council minutes, February 2019

¹⁴ Upper Clatford and Anna Valley Village Design statement

Many areas of trees appear on the HBIC Priority Habitats Map, shown below (darker green or dotted areas).

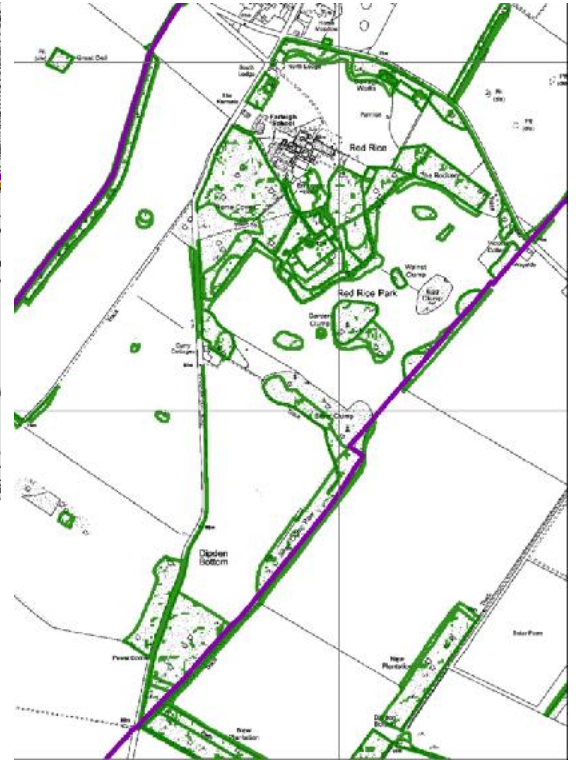
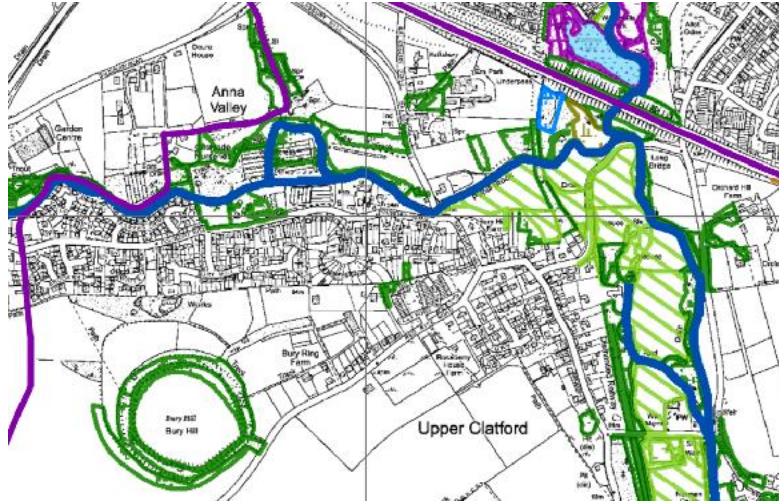


Photo 5: Trees lining property alongside Sam White's Hill

Map 3: Map 2: Maps showing wooded areas and around the settlements (above, Upper Clatford and Anna Valley and right, Red Rice) as provided on HBIC maps

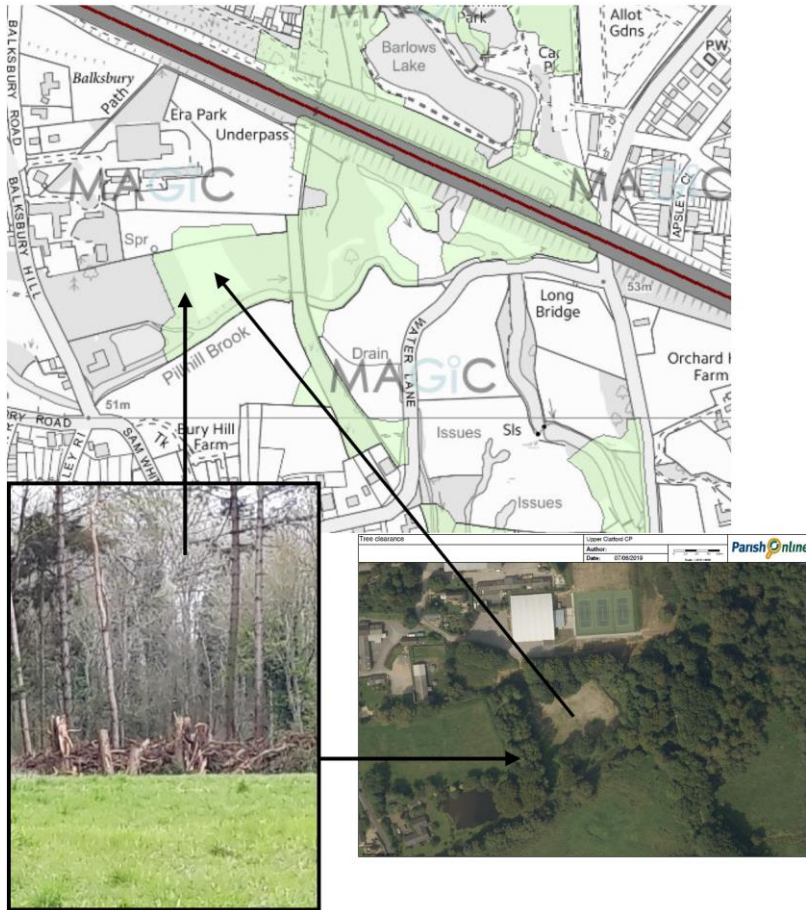
The full extent of priority habitats in Hampshire is not fully known - and may never be fully known due to the dynamic state of our countryside and the difficulties of obtaining access to many areas. Any 'gains' in priority habitat can be due to additional unknown habitat being discovered, habitat restoration or creation, or re-interpretation of old

Proposal: as loss of trees adversely impact the character of the villages and habitat for wildlife, development proposals should be sympathetic to retention of existing trees and, where possible, an increase.

survey data. Some of the areas shown are likely to represent probable important habitat but are vulnerable to damage and destruction by developers.

The National Forest Inventory (NFI) programme monitors woodland¹⁵ and trees within Great Britain. It includes the most in depth survey carried out on Britain's woodland and trees to date. Local woodland, and recent removal, is shown below.

¹⁵ <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/national-forest-inventory/>



These photographs highlight a growing threat where a landowner can irreversibly alter the rural feel of the Parish, landscape views, integrity of the Local Gap¹⁶ and habitat for wildlife. Deforestation caused by the unsustainable harvesting of timber and the conversion of forests to other land uses accounts for almost 20 per cent of global carbon dioxide emissions. The amount of carbon stored can be increased by actions to reduce the amount of deforestation and to convert non-forested areas to forest¹⁷.

Proposal: any future development that impacts upon areas of probable or actual priority habitat, as published by organisations such as DEFRA or HBIC, should preserve such habitat where possible. Development should not be permitted on areas cleared of trees and woodland unless such clearance is part of the planning application and appropriate mitigation provided.

¹⁶ see chapter UC10

¹⁷ <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/statistics/forestry-statistics/forestry-statistics-2018/sources/uk-forests-and-climate-change/>

UC 8.10 Chalk Pit



Photo 6: The Chalk Pit

For 160 years Anna Valley was a significant industrial area; a blacksmith, Robert Tasker, developed a plough that was suited to the local chalk downland and established an ironworks on “Clatford Marsh, Anna Valley”. Chalk was excavated from an adjacent hillside to prepare a foundation for the foundry; the Chalk Pit exists today as a prominent historic feature of the local landscape with populations of nesting birds.

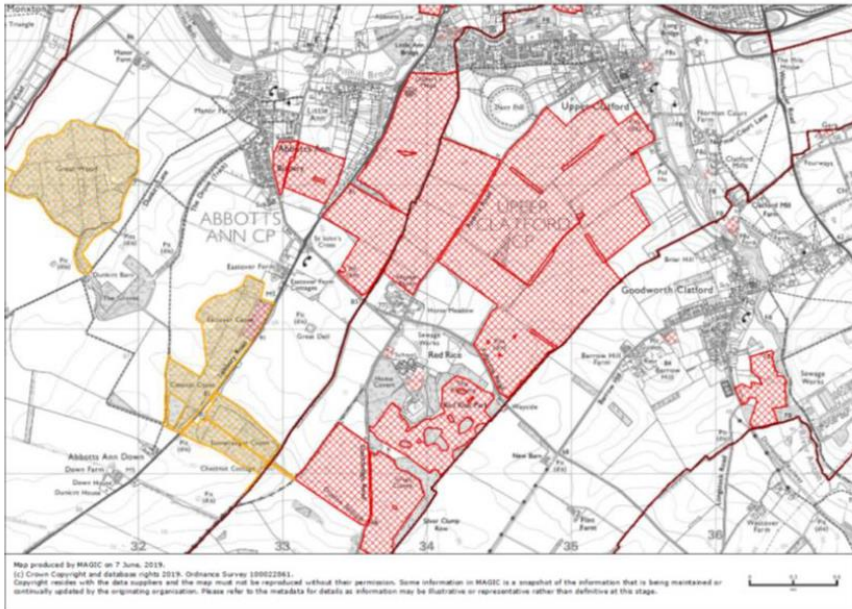
UC 8.11 Surrounding countryside

The Thruxton and Danebury Chalk Downland LCA consists of a gently undulating raised plateau broken by the chalk river valleys of the River Anton and Pillhill Brook. Isolated rounded hills such as Bury Hill provide a feature on the skyline. As with other areas of arable land on the chalk, there are likely to be unmapped headlands and field margins with small fragments of relict higher-diversity grassland that support populations of threatened arable plant species. Visibility of solar panels, disused buildings and greenhouses in visually prominent locations (such as where farms are located in elevated positions) can diminish the landscape character, as can tall structures including communication masts and transmitters.

Large areas of surrounding countryside fall under the Countryside Stewardship (CS) scheme¹⁸. CS is available to eligible farmers, woodland owners, foresters and other land managers and provides financial incentives to look after their environment by:

- conserving and restoring wildlife habitats
- flood risk management
- woodland creation and management
- reducing widespread water pollution from agriculture
- keeping the character of the countryside
- preserving historical features in the landscape
- encouraging educational access

¹⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/countryside-stewardship-get-paid-for-environmental-land-management>



Every effort should be made to maintain these areas as pristine countryside. Typical forces of change include permitted development rights allowing the conversion of agricultural buildings to dwellings, cumulatively urbanising rural character¹⁹.

Map 4: Map showing Countryside Stewardship registered land (red) adjacent to Upper Clatford settlement

Proposal: development outside of the settlement boundary, particularly in and around Red Rice, should be managed to prevent deterioration in landscape features. Caution should be exercised with proposals that convert redundant outbuildings as potential may exist for further modest alterations that create a dwelling.

UC 8.12 Historic environment

In addition to the heritage assets described in chapter UC7, there are numerous features of historical interest that contribute to the character of the settlements.

Proposal: items of local historical interest contribute to the character of our Parish and should be retained and protected, where possible in their original location.

¹⁹ Landscape Character Assessment main report para 109, <https://testvalley.gov.uk/planning-and-building/treesandlandscape/landscape-character-assessment-documents>

UC 8.15 Upper Clatford and Anna Valley

Upper Clatford is classified as a Chalk River Valley settlement. This settlement type is located within the principal river valleys running through the cretaceous chalk geology of the Test Valley and represent the largest single group settlement type for the Borough.

They are generally located upon the valley floor and can occupy one or both banks of the associated river. Anna Valley provides excellent evidence of this with Upper Clatford and Abbott's Ann occupying a single bank of the Pillhill Brook while Goodworth Clatford straddles the watercourse. The river is often crossed by means of a ford or bridge as at Stockbridge and these settlements are generally located at points which allow the river to be crossed. Chalk River Valley settlements often stretch along the line of river creating a 'linear' type of settlement.

Opportunities should be sought for creating new landscape features, habitats and green corridors within new development to reflect and enhance the key characteristics of this area.

Proposal: in accordance with Landscape Character Assessment guidelines, any development in the settlement fringe landscape should be designed so that it has a positive impact on the landscape and incorporates meaningful green infrastructure. New planting, in keeping with local characteristics, should be included to integrate and screen development proposals.