

# Charlton Parish Character Appraisal



**Prepared by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group in conjunction with  
Bluestone Planning  
in respect of the Charlton Neighbourhood Plan**

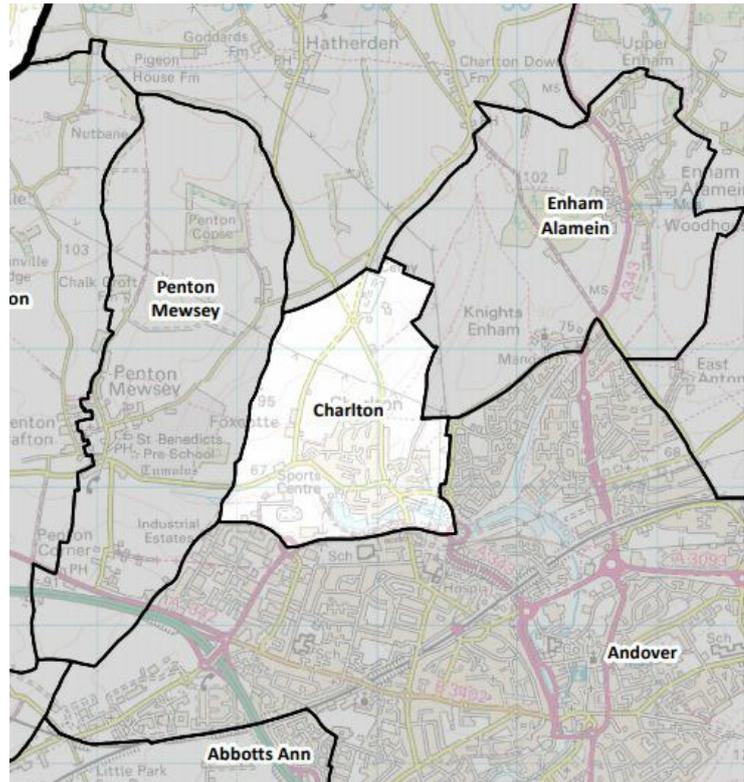
**Second Draft  
August 2019**

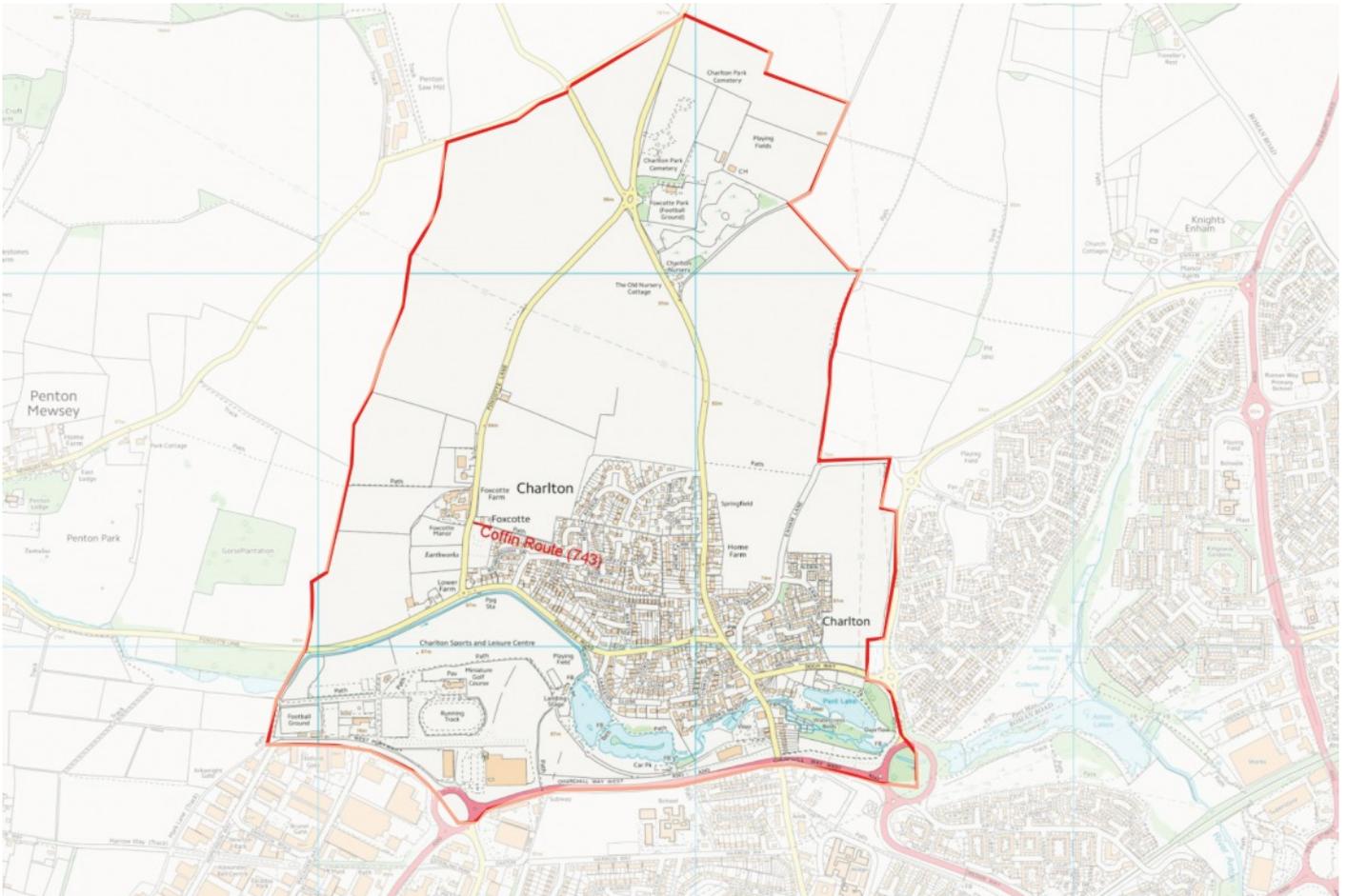
## Introduction

This character appraisal has been prepared by Charlton Parish Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

The aim of the report is to provide evidence regarding the character of the Parish and how it is perceived by its residents.

In order to successfully plan for the future growth and development of the parish it is imperative that there is a clear understanding of its character and what makes it unique.





## What is a Character Appraisal?

A character appraisal is a document which sets out the special interest, character and appearance of a particular place to highlight its local distinctiveness and identity.

The Appraisal itself is a factual and objective analysis, which seeks to enable an understanding of the wider qualities of distinctiveness of place by defining those physical elements that contribute to its special characteristics. Essentially it identifies those qualities that help to define and make the place unique: such as open space, materials, property type, maintenance, age of the structures.

In this instance, the study will define the character of the parish's built up area as a series of character areas. Each area is described against a series of common physical characteristics.

Whilst this appraisal seeks to assess the area's special interest as comprehensively as possible, it cannot cover the minutiae of all issues. Consequently, any omission of a particular building, feature or space should not be taken to imply that it has no value or

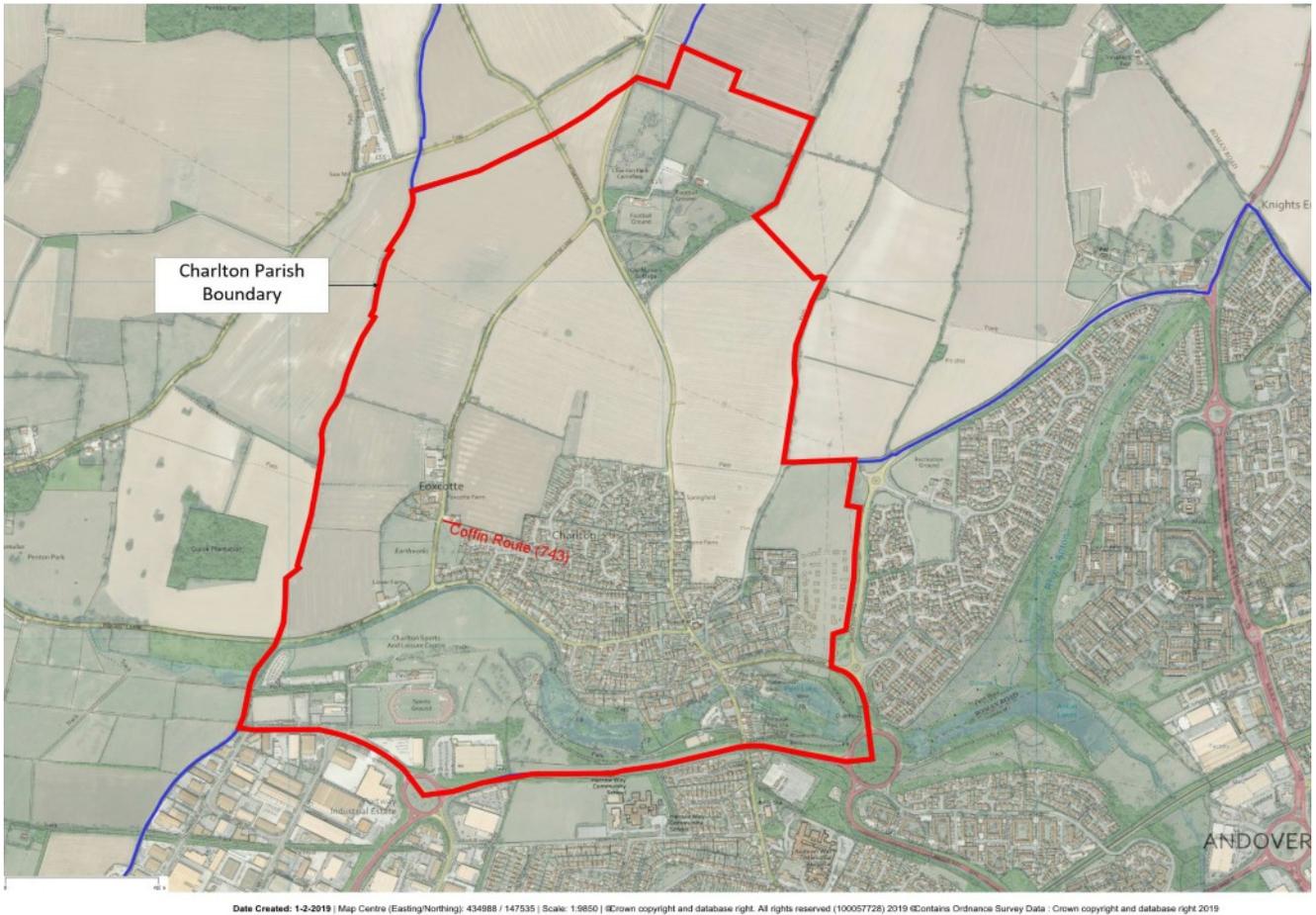
interest. The appraisal is the starting point; any development proposals should fully consider the appraisal, having regard to national and local policies. Such proposals should be informed by an individual assessment commensurate with the scale of the project proposed.

The information within the appraisal will comprise descriptive text supported by photographs, maps and other graphical material. It will also identify opportunities for future enhancement if considered necessary.

## Purpose of the Study

The study has been produced for a number of reasons, but most importantly to inform the preparation of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan

Identification of important issues will help shape the content and direction of that plan. In addition to the above, it could also be used as a development management tool to secure better quality development appropriate to its surroundings. Such a



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document can be used by residents and developers when preparing a planning application, or for anyone wishing to comment on a current planning application.

The Localism Act 2011 introduces the right for communities to shape their local areas by creating their own Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP).

The following appraisal was prepared in accordance with The RTP1 document entitled *“How to prepare a character assessment to support design policy within a neighbourhood plan - Putting the pieces together”*

The character assessment was then conducted using the character assessment toolkit and pro forma, produced by Oxford City Council in partnership with English Heritage.

Volunteers from the Steering Group undertook the survey work which included:

Recording in detail:

- Buildings, views, use, spaces, greenery and landscape etc as set out in more detail in the character appraisal section

Noting all visual features of the streetscapes and spirit of the place. All of the above will be recorded using the above pro-forma and large scale mapping.

Noting historical and cultural influences, by referring to historical maps, photographs, local web-sites and books, archaeological records, archives and talking to residents.

Collating records and checking against up to date sources and on-site information.

Obtaining photographic evidence to support this appraisal.

Reporting and further consultation via a variety of methods to ensure the appraisal encompasses a true reflection of the Parish.

Publication of a final draft to identify the key features of the Parish character areas and the implications for informing the Neighbourhood Plan process.

## History and Heritage

Charlton is a small village, which as can be seen from the development maps overleaf, was situated some distance from Andover. Whilst the built form of Charlton remained static as a linear form until the 1950s, Andover has grown considerably. The Portway Industrial Estate in particular has been the principle cause of coalescence between the two settlements.

During the 1960s, Charlton saw extensive residential development radiating out from the original north-south linear form. Development to the west has resulted in coalescence with the hamlet of Foxcote(e).

Foxcote was a separate settlement to the northwest of Charlton largely consisting of a chapel and farm buildings. The original chapel was demolished and rebuilt circa 1830, with the exception of the tower, which was retained as a mortuary chapel and subsequently converted into a dwelling.

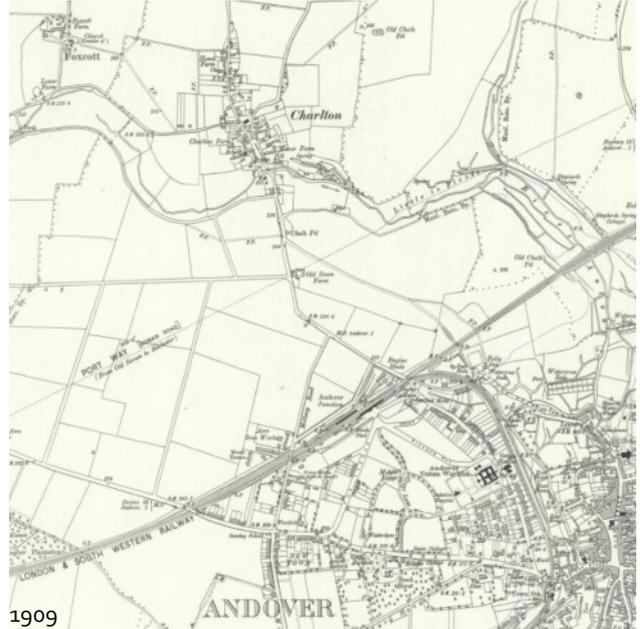
The remaining chapel material was re-used to build a church in neighbouring Charlton.



### Evolution of the Settlements Over Time



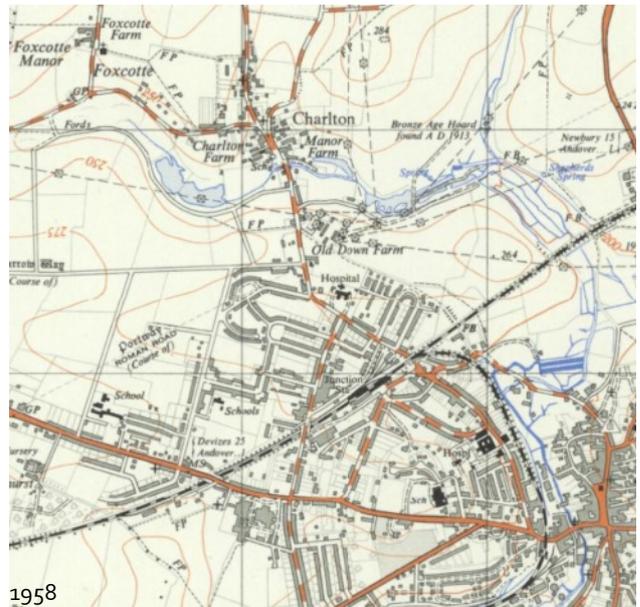
1896



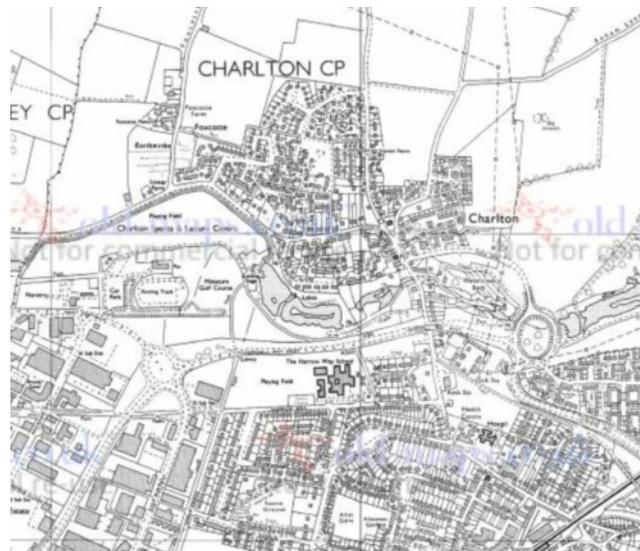
1909



1938

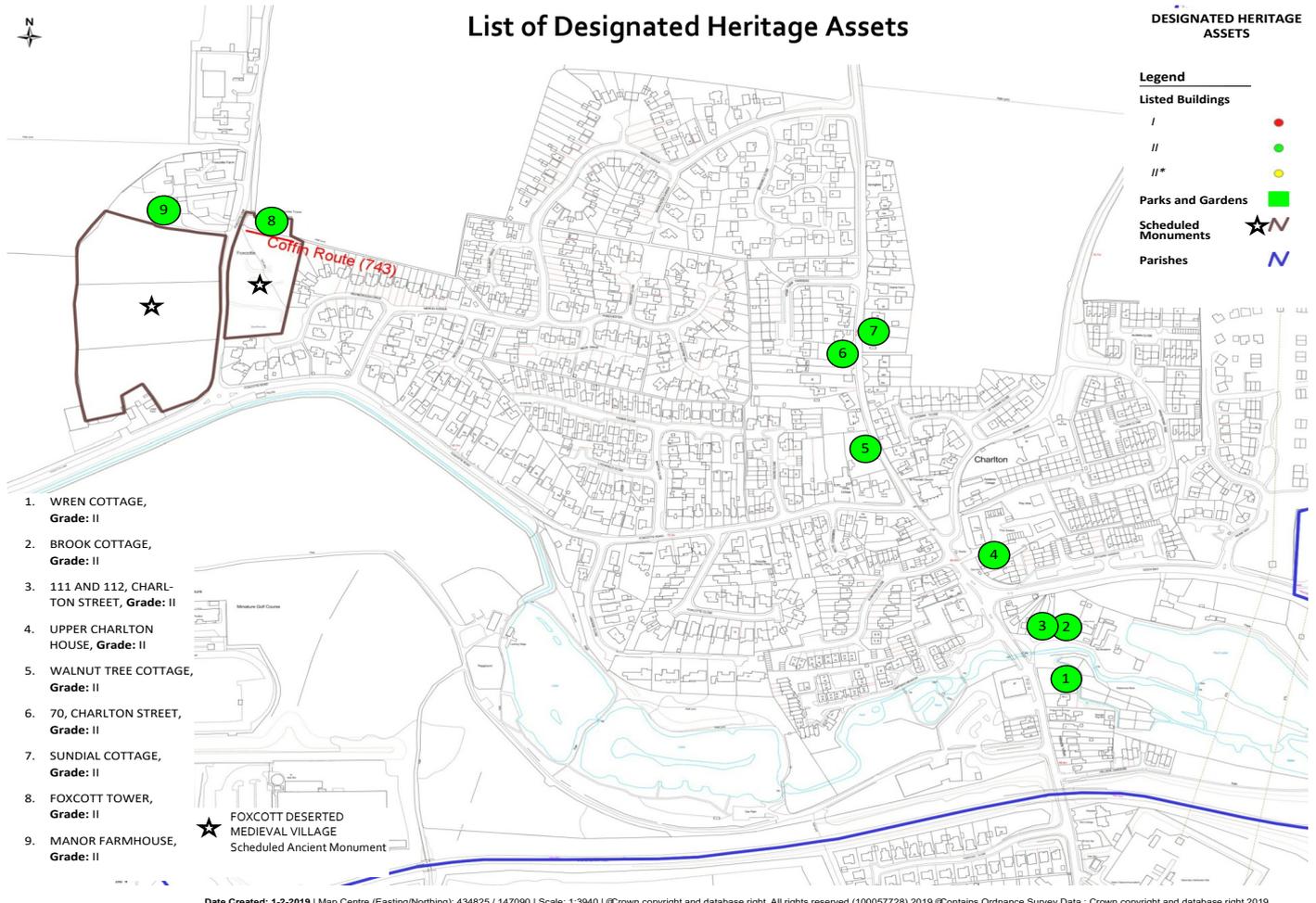


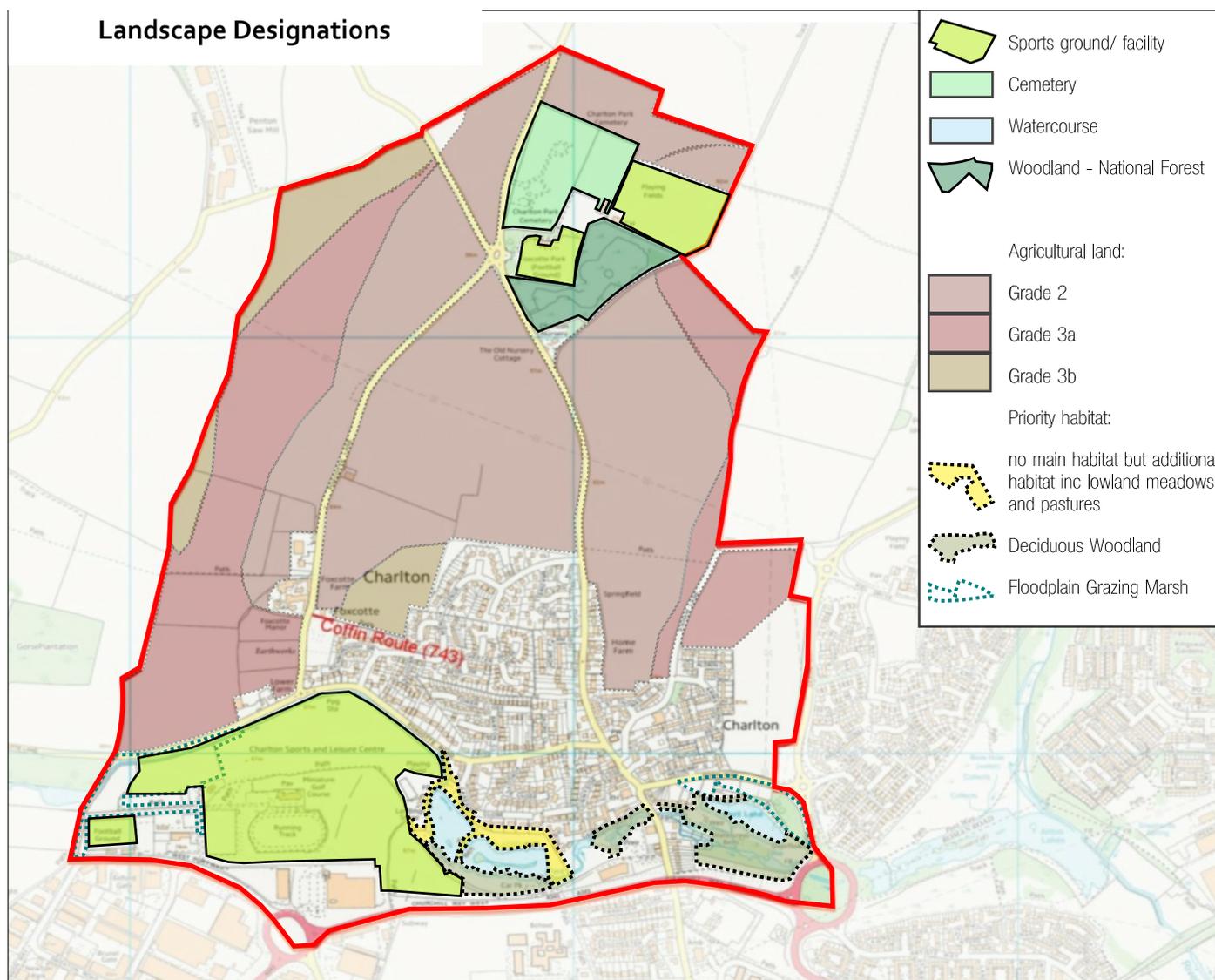
1958



1976

### List of Designated Heritage Assets





The above plan highlights the characteristics of areas of undeveloped land in the parish.

For a parish of this size, it is unusual to benefit from such an extensive amount of sports grounds and facilities.

These largely relate to Charlton Lakes, sports pitches and the Charlton Sports and Leisure Centre owned by Test Valley Borough Council.

A further area of public open space is to be finalised as part of the Goch Way development.

The majority of land outside of the built up area is open farm land. The plan highlights that the most significant amount is grade 2, very good quality agricultural land, which is some of the best and most versatile agricultural land.

The nature of the field patterns as shown on the aerial photograph enable long distance views from public

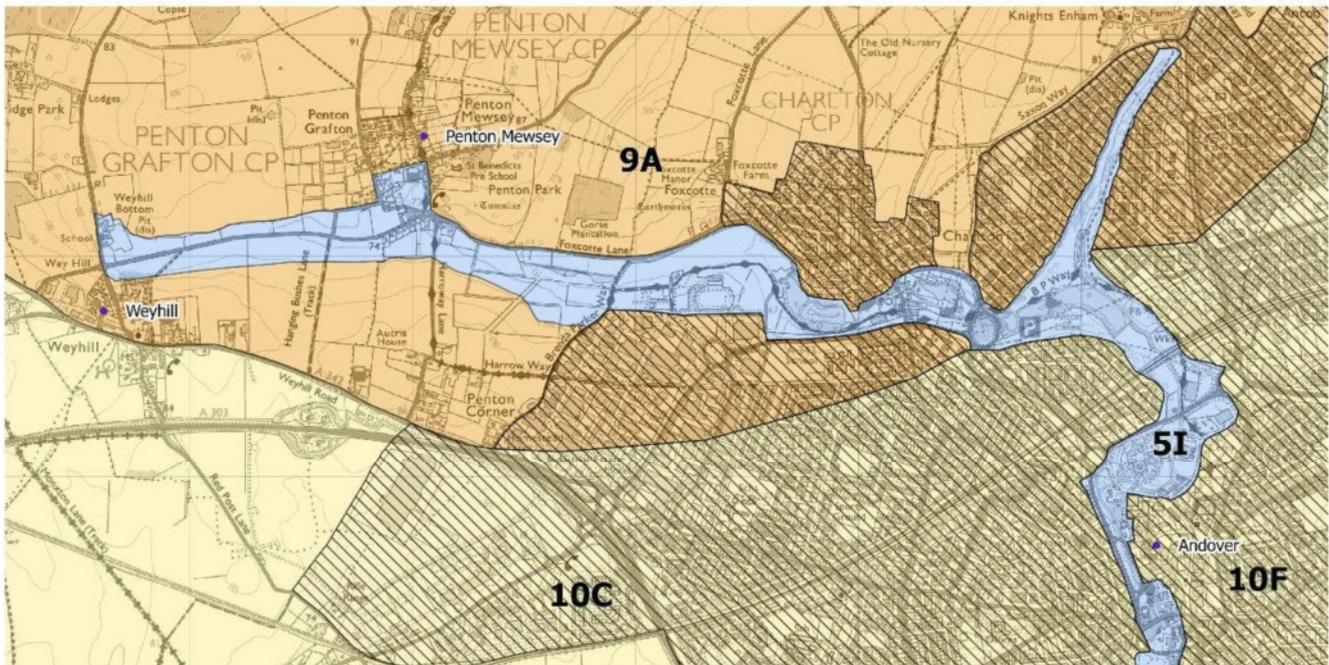
vantage points including the number of Public Rights of Way in and around the parish as shown above.

To the south of the parish are a number of priority habitat designations including Floodplain Grazing Marsh, following the River Anton and around Charlton Lakes. The latter along with the adjacent

Anton Lake having been formed from landfill and gravel extraction.



## Landscape Character Assessment



The Test Valley Landscape Character Assessment (TVLCA) was updated in 2018, based on work previous undertaken in 2004.

It includes a detailed analysis of the Parish based on the Landscape Character Types (LCTs) as set out by Natural England. These are subdivided into Landscape Character Areas (LCAs), with the relevant local LCAs shown on the map above.

There are two distinct LCAs within the Parish, namely The Upper River Anton Valley Floor (LCA 5I) and the North Andover Plateau (LCA 9A)

The TVLCA describes the area as:

*"The Upper River Anton Valley Floor is a narrow river valley that is typical of the source reaches of a lowland river, with frequent springs. The River Anton within this LCA is made up of two tributaries, which converge on the northern edge of Andover, before joining and flowing as one defined river. One of the two tributaries begin its life in a gentle 'v' shaped valley, flowing along field margins, before entering the broader flood plain of Andover, where it then flows through a number of manmade lakes. The other tributary (known as the source of the river) flows as a single river course through an area of scrub before joining the first tributary south of Charlton."*

It then goes on to set out a number key factors which are essential to the understanding of the landscape character in this part of the Parish.

The following details from the TVLCA are of most relevance:

### **"Local Physical Influences**

**Geology and soils:** Alluvium as the valley passes through Andover, with Gravels further upstream.

**Landform:** A shallow valley.

**Drainage:** A small meandering watercourse with a number of lakes on former gravel pits to the north of the town

### **Local Biodiversity and Vegetation Pattern**

Large areas of the valley floor within the LCA that are not under residential, commercial or infrastructure development are devoted to more formal recreational uses associated with larger ponds and lakes, such as at Charlton Lakes

### **Settlement Pattern**

Charlton and Andover extend into this Landscape Character Area. However, settlement expansion onto the valley floor appears to have been limited.

No farmsteads are located within this character area

*Charlton: Chalk Down Land: Hill Top Settlement Type***Key Valued Characteristics**

- *Mixed riparian habitats including a number of lakes, small woodlands and unimproved pasture*
- *Significant survival of valley floor enclosures, water meadows and watercress beds.*
- *Abandoned watercress beds that have become vegetated and now support a varied range of flora and fauna*
- *River crossing point in Charlton retains village landscape character with line of thatched cottages overlooking open setting leading down to the river*
- *Traditional building styles including brick or cob walls with thatch and clay tiled roofs as seen adjacent to the river within Charlton*
- *Footpath links out of Andover to surrounding countryside to the north*
- *Provision of recreation activities including fishing*

**Key Detractors**

- *Development pressures from Andover through settlement infill, and further development of transport and other infrastructure*
- *Visibility of overhead pylons*

**Local Natural and Cultural Landscape Issues**

- *Development pressures from Andover through settlement infill, and further development of transport corridor and other infrastructure causing the draining of wetland areas, degradation of river banks and the natural channel profile resulting in the erosion of the River Anton natural chalk stream landscape character*
- *Pollution of the river and its tributaries through fertiliser and road run off*
- *Intrusion from fly tipping*
- *Pressure for recreation facilities*

- *Retaining undeveloped gap between western edge of Andover and Penton Mewsey including the setting of Penton Park*
- *Loss of pasture to arable use, loss of marshland to improved pasture*
- *The area is vulnerable to the impact of land uses on the surrounding valley slopes of adjacent LCA (character areas)*
- *Western end, future potential demand for mineral extraction of sharp sand and gravel*

**Landscape Strategy and Guidelines**

*The Upper River Anton Valley Floor is important, not only for its wetland habitats including a water meadow, but also for its function as a linear green space through Andover. The overall strategy is therefore to enhance the river character and seek opportunities to create new riverside landscapes within the Upper River Anton Valley Floor and to protect and enhance the key valued characteristics.*

**Landscape Strategy and Guidelines****Landscape Distinctiveness**

- *Enhance and restore the landscape setting of the valley floodplain*
- *Retain and improve links from adjacent areas of Andover to the existing river valley*
- *Seek where possible to restore levels of tranquillity and reduce over dominance of highway infrastructure*
- *Reinforce existing local features and enhance sense of place of river crossings*
- *Encourage 'riverside character planting' to enhance river character and the context of the River Anton*

**Built Development**

- *Maintain and further enhance the network of open spaces adjacent to the River Anton*

- *Enhance the adjacent urban edge, to these open areas and the river*
- *New adjacent development should also respond to local contours and with planting which creates an attractive soft edge with framed views of any new development"*

The TVLCA sets out additional details for LCA 9A the North Andover Plateau.

This is a much larger area than the Upper River Anton Valley Floor stretching from Andover to the edge of the AONB, Hatherden and Enham Alamein to the north.

The TVLCA describes the area as:

*"The North Andover Plateau is a gentle sloping plateau falling from around 125m AOD in the north to around 80m AOD in the south on the edge of Andover. Across the plateau a series of dry gravel river valleys run in a predominantly southerly direction linking to the River Anton, which eventually flows into the River Test south of Andover.*

*The dry valleys and gentle ridges have created a complex land use and farming pattern, with predominantly larger arable fields found on the areas of higher ground...The larger arable fields lack hedgerows, but groupings of these fields are often enclosed by shelter belts, creating large uncomplicated open areas.*

*The associated parklands bring further diversity to the land surrounding these settlements. The edge of Andover is strongly defined by fields meeting areas of built development. The open aspect of development to the countryside could have a visual impact and urbanise the immediate landscape quality."*

*It then goes on to set out a number key factors which are essential to the understanding of the landscape character in this part of the Parish.*

*The following details from the TVLCA are of most relevance:*

### **"Local Physical Influences**

**Geology and soils:** *The plateau is made up of Chalk and deposits of clay with flints, with dry river valleys within Gravel on the valley floor.*

**Landform:** *South facing slopes with shallow dry valleys*

**Drainage:** *Area drains into the River Anton*

### **Local Biodiversity and Vegetation Pattern**

- *This landscape is predominantly arable farming*

### **Historic**

- *Penton Mewsey Conservation Area*
- *Scheduled Monuments*
- *Foxcott deserted medieval village*
- *Listed buildings*
- *Registered Parks and Gardens*

### **Remoteness and Tranquillity**

*To the north of this area, where the influence of Andover is less pronounced, there are some remoter areas which will have a good level of tranquillity*

### **Key Valued Characteristics**

*Complex plateau landscape with dry river gravel valleys and gentle ridges*

- *Contrasting open areas of arable farmland with shelter belts on higher ground*
- *Important countryside gaps between Andover and other settlements*
- *Mixed historic landscape displaying good survival of early post-medieval field systems along the southern border of this character area*
- *Significant influence from the country houses and associated parklands and woodlands present within this character area*
- *Local buildings are typically brick and flint with clay tile roofs*
- *Extensive views from the network of public rights of way and lanes running through the area including to undeveloped skylines of ridges and wooded horizons*
- *Rural character of lanes criss-crossing the landscape linking the settlements and farmsteads*

### **Key Detractors**

- *Lack of hedgerows in arable landscape*
- *Visual intrusion from pylons crossing the area*
- *Views to large-scale buildings within business parks on the edge of Andover to the south of A303 (within LCA 10C)*
- *Suburban boundary treatments in rural locations*
- *Lack of hedgerows in arable landscape*
- *Visual intrusion from pylons crossing the area*
- *Views to large-scale buildings within business parks on the edge of Andover to the south of A303 (within LCA 10C)*
- *Suburban boundary treatments in rural locations*
- *Potential solar and other renewable energy development eroding the rural character of the area*

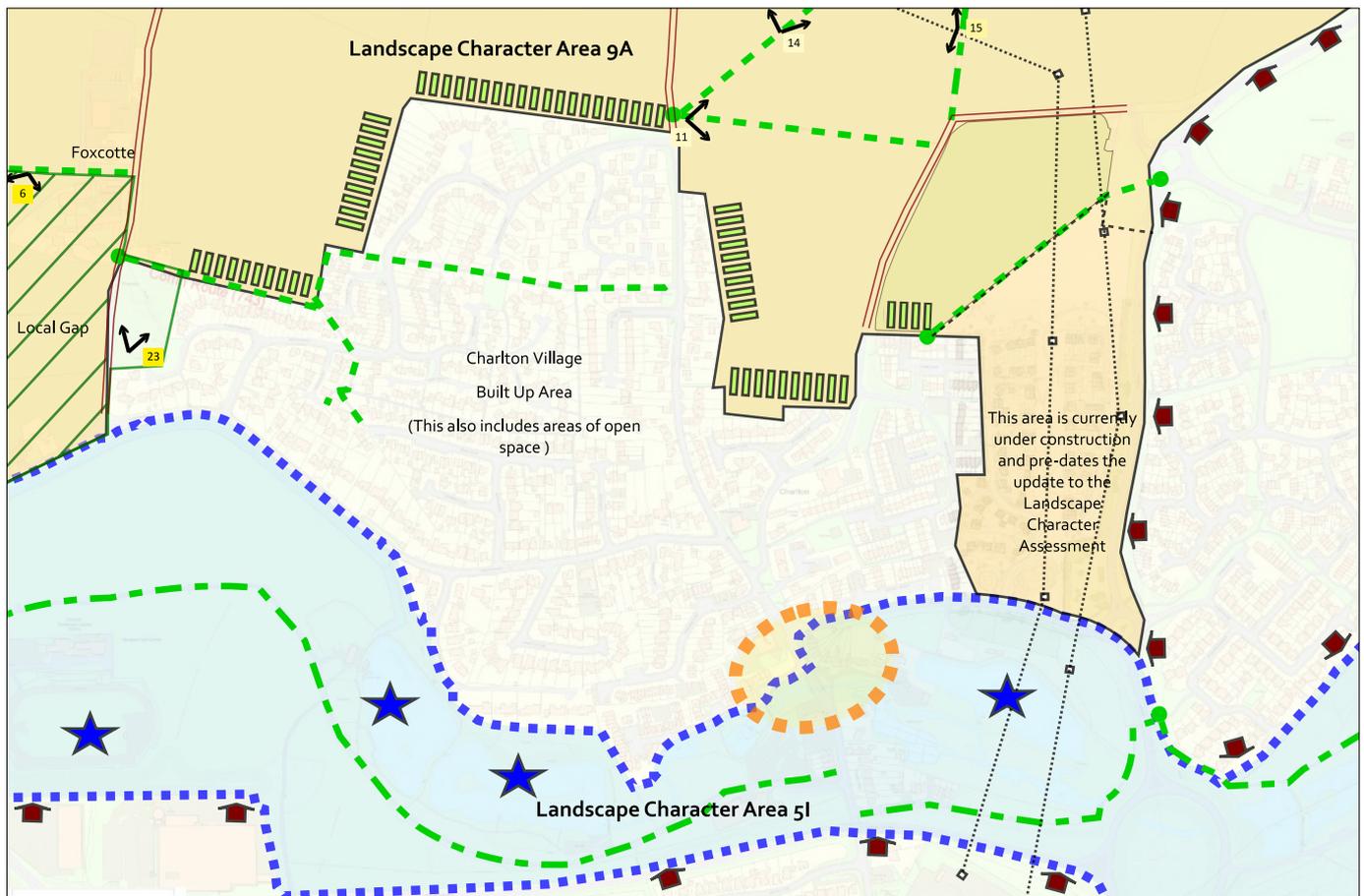
### **Landscape Strategy and Guidelines**

*The proximity of North Andover Plateau to Andover and the openness of the landscape make this character area particularly vulnerable to visual intrusion from any urban expansion or new urban fringe development. The overall strategy is to enhance the varied landscape structure and rural character of North Andover Plateau and seek opportunities to create a stronger edge treatment to the settlements through appropriate planting and protect and enhance the key valued characteristics.*

- *Protect the distinctive form and character of separate settlements*
- *Maintain the existing complexity and variety of the landscape*
- *Maintain existing levels of tranquillity and minimise the impact of development on the quiet enjoyment of this area*
- *Discourage further amalgamation of fields and loss of hedgerows and encourage replanting of hedgerows and hedgerow trees*
- *Maintain the close relationship between the settlement pattern, late medieval/early post-medieval landscape and adjacent parkland*

- *Reinforce the edge of Andover through careful design and appropriate landscape planting*
- *Avoid deterioration in the settlement fringe landscape arising from poor design and intrusive development*
- *Improve management of the landscape around settlements*
- *Seek improved management and maintenance of farmsteads and farms in the fringe areas*
- *Opportunities to be sought to restore local landscape features and create a stronger landscape structure within the settlement edge of Andover*
- *Avoid the coalescence and loss of separate identity of Andover and nearby settlements which are in places separated by a narrow gap of fields*
- *Proposals for solar development should consider the impacts on the valued predominantly rural character, sense of remoteness and tranquillity. Potential cumulative effects with existing solar farms in adjacent LCAs should also be considered*
- *Consider possibility of introducing recreational focal points"*

These points have been transposed onto the landscape character plan overleaf.



The key issues for consideration in the Neighbourhood Plan:

- Development pressure from Andover
- Protect the distinctive form and character of separate settlements. In particular, retaining the undeveloped gap between the parish and Penton Mewsey
- Retain and improve links from adjacent built up areas to the existing river valley
- Where possible, restore levels of tranquillity and reduce dominance of highway infrastructure - where the A343 adjoins Charlton Lakes.
- Reinforce existing local features and enhance sense of place of river crossing in the centre of the village.
- Maintain and further enhance the network of open spaces in the parish including Charlton Lakes and encourage 'riverside character planting'
- Reinforce the edge of the built up area through appropriate landscape planting and avoid deterioration in the settlement fringe arising from poor design and intrusive development
- Development pressure from recreation.

Key

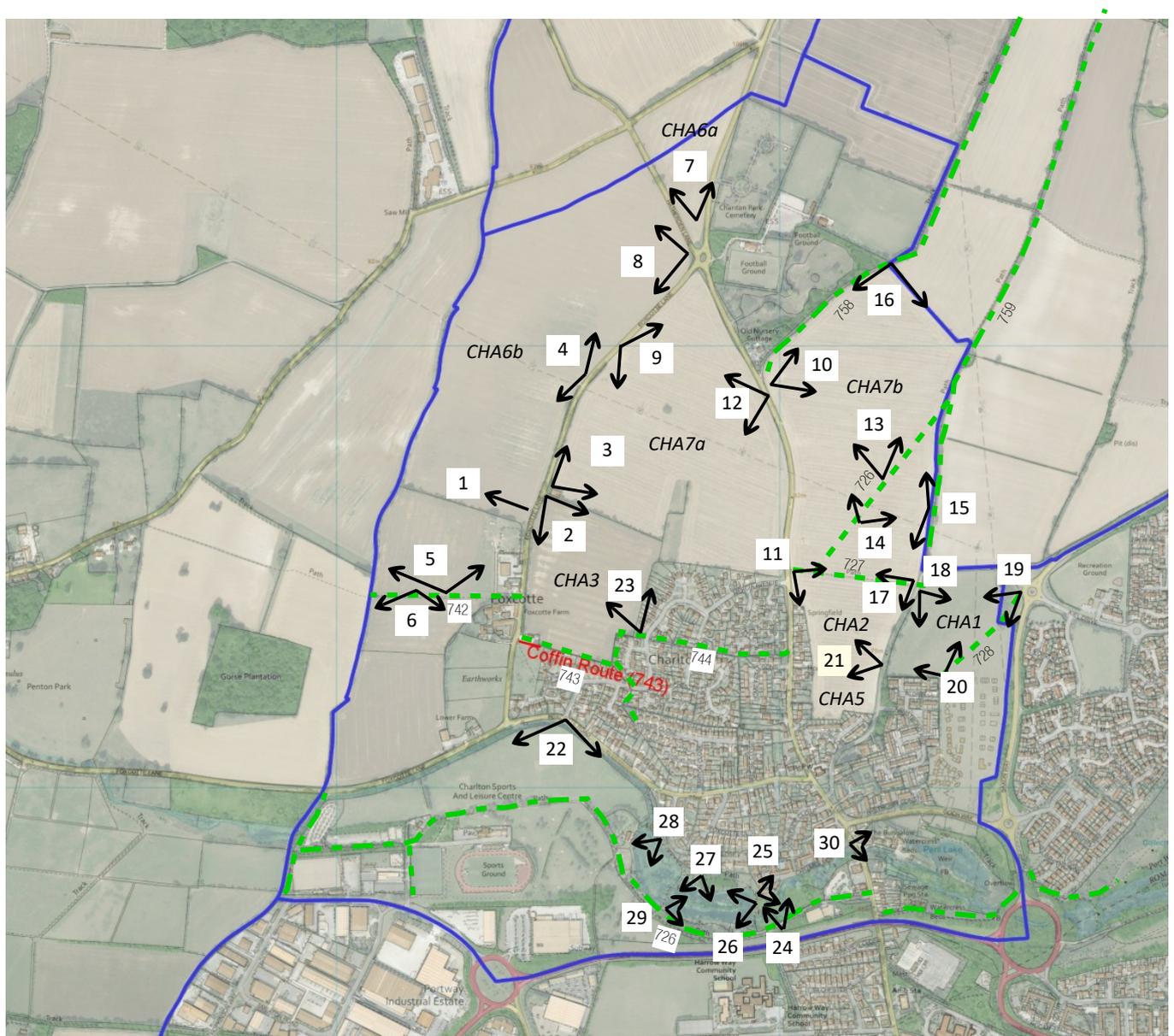
- The North Andover Plateau Character Area 9A
- The Upper River Anton Valley Floor Character Area 51
- Development pressures from Andover inc transport and other infrastructure
- Footpath links out of Andover to surrounding countryside to the north. Retain and improve links from adjacent areas of Andover to the existing river valley
- River crossing point in Charlton retains village landscape character with line of thatched cottages overlooking open setting leading down to the river. Reinforce existing local features and enhance sense of place of river crossings
- Pressure for recreation facilities
- Visibility of overhead pylons
- Retaining undeveloped gap between western edge of Andover and Penton Mewsey including the setting of Penton Park
- Encourage 'riverside character planting' to enhance river character. Maintain and further enhance the network of open spaces adjacent to the River Anton
- Enhance the adjacent urban edge, open areas and the river
- Extensive views from the network of public rights of way and lanes
- Rural character of lanes

## Viewpoint Analysis

The separate viewpoint assessment sets out views that have been determined to be significant within the parish.

A summary of the findings has been set out below and overlaid with views of the highest significance depicted in photos.

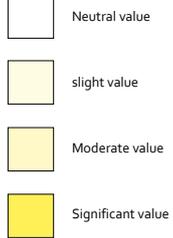
### VIEWPOINT LOCATIONS



**Viewpoint Analysis**

Each viewpoint has been assessed by the residents as to whether it provides amenity value. This can be recreational, historical or landscape character.

A sliding scale has been produced and set out below:



It can be clearly seen that the views along the western edge of the parish are largely considered to be of moderate to significant value. This corresponds with the fact that they largely consist of open, long distant, wide ranging views and fall within the Local Gap or its setting.

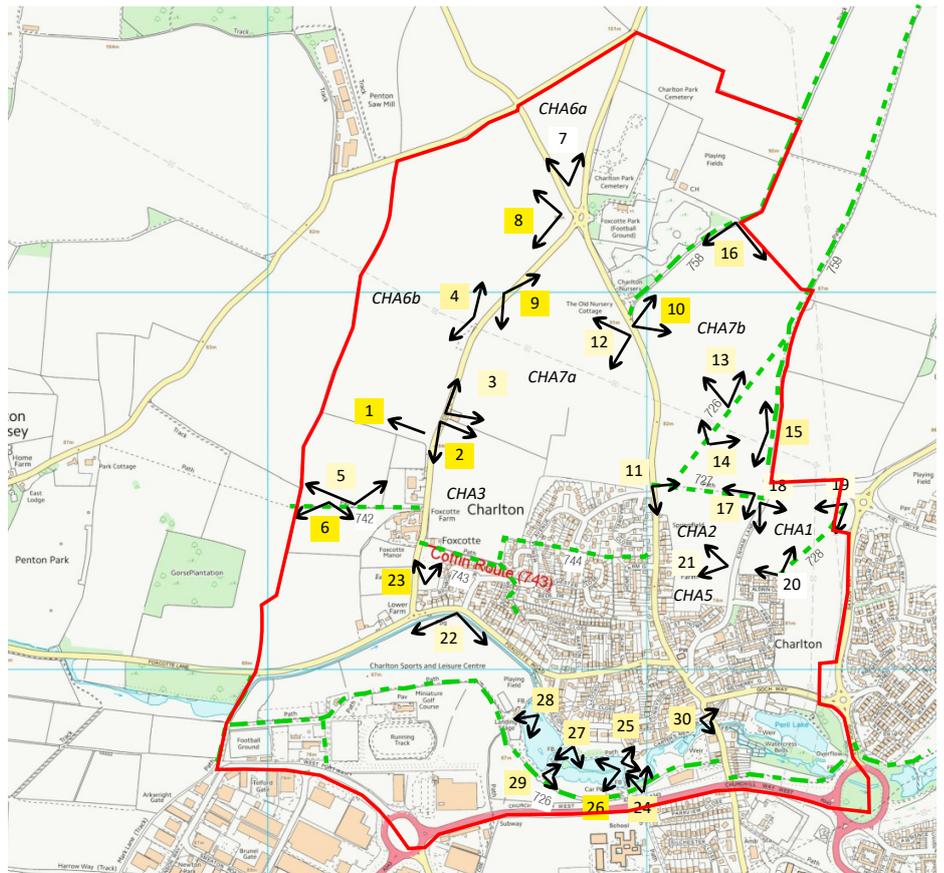
Further long distance views to the north east of the settlement are also considered to be moderate to significant in landscape character terms.

Views of the designated heritage assets around Foxcotte are also considered to be of significant value.

Charlton Lakes are considered to provide largely moderate value in both recreational and landscape character terms.

Views alongside the edge of the village have either not been identified as important or of slight to neutral value.

**VIEWPOINT ANALYSIS**



1. Long distance views along Foxcotte Lane looking west into CHA6/ SHLAA 149 toward Penton Mewsey Parish



10. Long distance views Hatherden Road/ Footpath 758 looking north/ northeast into CHA7b/ SHLAA 155



9. Panorama highlighting extensive long distance views from Foxcotte Lane southeast into CHA7a/ SHLAA 155



27. Looking east from the lakeside path across Charlton Lakes (fishing)



28. Looking southwest from the lakeside path across Charlton Lakes (recreation)



29. Looking northwest from the lakeside path across Charlton Lakes (fishing)



30. Looking east across the Green with Charlie's (Peril) Lake beyond



23. Looking north from the informal path between Foxcotte Lane and Richborough Drive with the listed Foxcotte Tower visible to the right



24. Looking north from footpath 726 to the footbridge and informal lakeside path with housing at Carters Meadow visible in the centre



25. Looking north along informal lakeside path with housing at Carters Meadow visible to the left



26. Looking north from the lakeside footbridge across Charlton Lakes (fishing)