

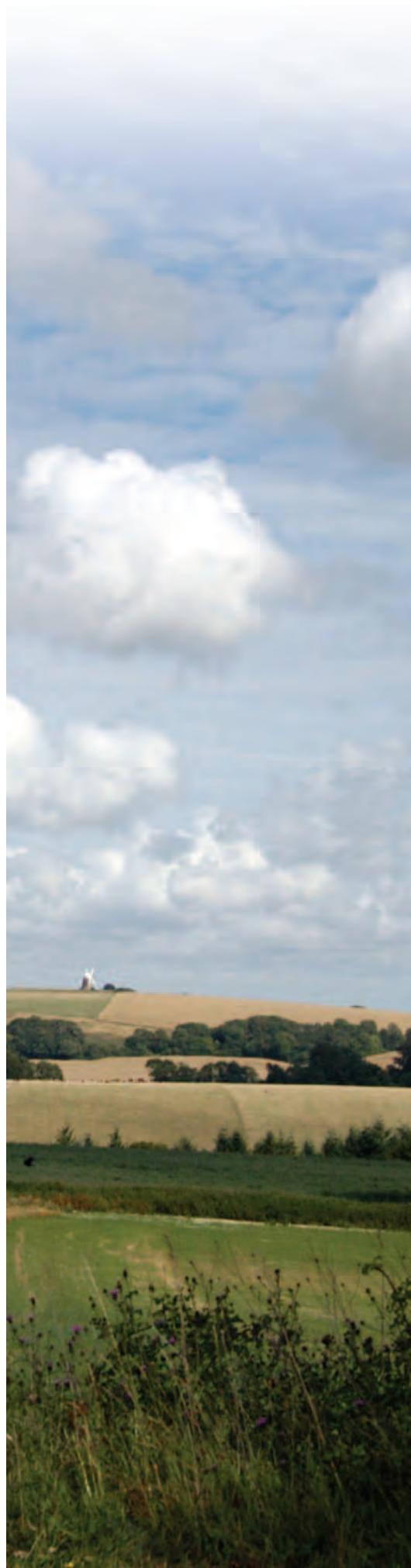


New tree planting on pasture at Frog Farm, Petworth

COUNTY-WIDE LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES

This section translates the five key Strategy objectives into a series of County-wide Landscape Guidelines for dealing with the likely changes impacting on the landscape of West Sussex.

These will be used by the partners to instigate actions which, in turn, will realise the vision. The County Landscape Character Assessment, to be published separately, describes individual Landscape Character Areas and contains complementary Land Management Guidelines for each of them.



Landscape Guidelines for general development and land use change

4.1 The first Strategy objective aims to secure high quality new development which contributes to and reinforces landscape character. These Guidelines will be used to influence and inform development planning policy and the development control process:

- encourage and promote the preparation and adoption by the local authorities of Countryside Design Summaries and Village Design Statements as a way of providing detailed design principles for new development and its setting and resisting the suburbanisation of the environment, for instance, standard treatments of highways and other public areas, and inappropriate designs and materials.
- locate and design development to retain a sense of the identity of settlements and ensure their separateness.
- protect the setting of areas valued for their natural beauty.
- minimise the visual prominence of outdoor storage and parking areas.
- encourage the planting of mainly native tree and shrub species in association with new development. Use native plant species of local provenance specific to the national Character Areas.
- ensure where possible that both landscape and planting schemes are carried out in advance of development.
- minimise the impact of lighting in the landscape.
- protect areas of tranquil character from visually intrusive or noisy development.
- incorporate where possible existing biodiversity, heritage and landscape features into new development schemes.
- secure where appropriate landscape and habitat enhancement both on and off site (informal open space, tree planting, habitat creation including grassland, heath and wetland features etc) as a requirement of new development.
- encourage the use of available locally distinctive building materials in new development.



Modern housing development

Landscape Guidelines for residential development on the rural urban fringe

4.2 The first Strategy objective also applies, linked with initiatives on open land which connect town and country visually and create access to the local and wider countryside. Guidelines for development on the rural urban fringe include:

- ensure that buildings and infrastructure are located to avoid loss of important on-site views, and off-site views towards features such as church towers, fine buildings, historic and archaeological monuments or the wider landscape, as well as avoiding intrusion onto sensitive ridgelines, prominent slopes, and damage to settlement settings.
- seek new development of high quality which fits well within the landscape and reflects local distinctiveness and characteristics in terms of settlement form, height, scale, plot shape and size, elevations, roofline and pitch, overall colour and texture and boundary treatment (walls, fences, hedges, gates),



Horse grazing on the rural urban fringe

- make the most of opportunities for conservation, restoration and enhancement of existing buildings in keeping with local and historic character.
- retain where possible on new development sites key landscape features such as woodland, watercourses and hedgerows, as a basis for the new landscape structure and setting of the site.
- conserve and enhance green corridors into settlements when development is being considered and retain where possible existing wildlife habitats, hedgerows, shelterbelts, orchards, and trees and shrubs.
- ensure that the design, layout and ground modelling of new development takes account of the nature (grain) of the adjoining landscape.
- integrate new development on the edges of settlements into the wider landscape. Use open space and planting in keeping with local character to provide a visual link to the countryside and an attractive backdrop and foil to new development.
- incorporate where possible intact historic landscape and visible archaeological features within landscaping schemes.

Landscape Guidelines for development in rural settlements

4.3 The planning policies of the local authorities in West Sussex allow for small-scale incremental development in the countryside in rural settlements as a means of supporting the economic and social health of the countryside. The amount of such development envisaged in the County Structure Plan is small. A further aspect of the first Strategy objective will be to ensure that new development in villages and in the countryside is handled sensitively to complement and strengthen landscape character. Guidelines for development in rural settlements include:

- ensure that new development respects and complements rural settlement form, pattern and character and its landscape setting, reinforcing local distinctiveness.
- identify and conserve sensitive parts of settlement settings. Where possible, maintain a direct relationship between the old settlement core and the surrounding landscape, allowing views in and out of the settlement.
- taking into account road safety issues, seek to design highways improvements and traffic management and calming schemes, within and on the approaches to the settlement, in ways which do not detract from local historic and rural character.
- use where possible designs and materials for rural road schemes which are locally distinctive, and road surface dressings which complement local building materials.
- use mainly native tree, woodland and hedge planting to screen intrusive development, provide an attractive backdrop to new development, frame good views and create a sense of enclosure and arrival.
- minimise urban features such as close-board fencing and fast-growing coniferous trees such as cypresses.
- incorporate where possible intact historic landscape and visible archaeological features within landscaping schemes.



Shipley village

Landscape Guidelines for commercial and industrial development including rural diversification

4.4 Supporting and maintaining the social health and economy of the County is a prime policy aim. Under the first Strategy objective, it will be important to ensure that, as with new housing, the location, design and setting of new commercial and industrial buildings are handled sensitively to complement and strengthen landscape character. Guidelines for commercial and industrial development including rural diversification include:



Commercial greenhouses on the South Coast Plain

- ensure new land uses and development associated with rural diversification projects relate well to and retain key existing landscape features and minimise modification to existing landforms and vegetation cover.
- ensure that new development makes the most of opportunities for conservation, restoration and enhancement of existing buildings in keeping with local historic and architectural character.
- locate buildings and associated infrastructure to avoid loss of views on and off the site, intrusion on to sensitive ridgelines or prominent slopes and other highly visible locations, and to minimise damage to the settings of settlements.
- retain key landscape features on new development sites such as woodland, watercourses and hedgerows, to aid the new landscape structure and setting of the site.
- ensure that the design of buildings and structures is of high quality with clean, elegant lines. Consider massing, form, height, colour, ensure that the design, layout and ground modelling of new development takes account of the “grain” of the adjoining landscape, and avoid visual clutter including signage on all elevations.
- orientate and position buildings to minimise the landscape impact of servicing them.
- co-ordinate building colour to secure a complementary effect between buildings and the surrounding landscape (for example, matt neutral colours minimising reflectivity).
- secure the use of mainly native tree, woodland and hedge planting to screen developments sufficiently and integrate them with the wider landscape. This may include substantial advance woodland planting on and off-site, in wide belts, on land secured specifically for this purpose.
- ensure site entrances are designed to fit within the landscape and use discreet signage.
- minimise the impact of lighting used in development in the landscape.
- secure where appropriate habitat creation and enhancement both on and off site as a requirement of new development.
- incorporate where possible intact historic landscape and visible archaeological features within landscaping schemes.

Landscape Guidelines for agricultural buildings and farm access development

4.5 Under the first Strategy objective, the location, layout, design and finish of agricultural buildings must also be handled with particular care, to ensure that landscape character is not needlessly damaged. Guidelines for agricultural buildings and farm access development include:

- avoid siting new farm buildings on sensitive ridgelines and visible slopes or where they could have an adverse visual impact on historic farmsteads.
- reflect where possible traditional building layout in new development.
- retain where possible on new development sites key landscape features such as woodland, shelterbelts, orchards, single trees, watercourses and hedgerows, as a basis for the new landscape structure and setting of the site.
- minimise the visual prominence of outdoor storage and parking areas.
- minimise the visual domination of large expanses of wall and roof using changes of materials or colour, and varied pitches and shapes for roofs.
- incorporate available local building materials into new development favouring neutral matt colours, for example, olive green or grey.
- secure the use of mainly native tree, woodland and hedge planting to screen and integrate developments into the wider landscape. Fast-growing conifers such as cypresses should be avoided.
- retain original farm entrances and site new ones to minimise tree and hedgerow loss, replacing any planting unavoidably lost.
- avoid the use of chain-link, weld-mesh, close-board and other forms of fencing and gates normally associated with urban commercial and industrial locations.



Modern farm development in the landscape

Landscape Guidelines for telecommunications developments

4.6 Only a few years ago, telecommunications masts were few and far between, often confined to larger masts on prominent sites, for instance, at Bexley Hill near Midhurst and, on a lesser scale, at Truleigh Hill on the South Downs. In the past, larger-scale telecommunications mast development was successfully opposed at The Trundle, a prominent landmark topped by an Iron Age hill fort (a Scheduled Ancient Monument or SAM) at Goodwood. The mast at Tolmare Farm, Longfurlong was recently taken down because of its unacceptable impact on the setting of two SAMs (the adverse impact of development on the setting of a SAM is referred to in the *Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act, 1979*).

4.7 Today, smaller telecommunications masts have proliferated. Moreover, the process of achieving full telephonic coverage is by no means complete and is likely to evolve further as new generations of telecommunications are developed. Under the first Strategy objective, the location, appearance and finish of telecommunications masts and equipment must be handled with particular care, to ensure that landscape character is not needlessly damaged.



Disguised telecommunication masts near Cuckfield

Guidelines for telecommunications development include:

- in siting telecommunications masts and other development, avoid prominent skylines, sites highly visible from settlements, roads, rights of way, important heritage sites, and sites within important views.
- locate new masts and associated development where the impact can be mitigated by strong landscape features such as woodland.
- seek masts of a simple, elegant design finished in neutral matt colours to blend with the dominant colours of the background.
- seek a minimum of associated buildings and fencing, and screen any necessary development that is required using native tree and shrub species local to the area.
- use existing roads and tracks where possible to gain access to installations.
- where unavoidable, avoid prominent locations (such as open hillside) for new access routes and hard standings, following field boundaries, surfaced as trackways with crushed stone and grass verges.

Landscape Guidelines for new roads, major road improvements and maintenance

4.8 All parts of the County are highly accessible to those who have cars. This has led to a sea change in the social and economic composition of rural areas, where urban-based dwellers have progressively replaced dwindling populations occupied in agriculture and rural servicing.

4.9 Given the substantial increase in traffic over the last few decades, many new roads have been built to cope with the flows. Large roads present particular landscape challenges and can be a threat to tranquillity. Dealing with these challenges is an important part of the first Strategy objective. Much can be done to mitigate the impact of highways development, improvement and maintenance on the landscape, whilst meeting road safety requirements. Guidelines for new roads, major road improvements and maintenance include:

- ensure that routes for new roads and bypasses are aligned and designed to respond to the pattern and character of the landscape, minimising their impact on existing landscape and historic landscape features and allowing sufficient space for embankments and cuttings to be shaped to reflect the surrounding landform.
- secure mitigation measures including new planting, earthworks and hardworks reflecting the pattern and character of the local landscape, and where possible ensure that these measures are partly or wholly undertaken in advance of construction.
- secure bridges and other engineering structures of elegant design with clean lines, reflecting where possible traditional local design, and using locally distinctive building materials where appropriate and available.
- ensure, where appropriate, habitat creation and enhancement within the road curtilage and seek such measures off-site, on land secured specifically for this purpose.
- encourage reappraisal of the visual impact of existing major roads and develop landscape enhancement schemes to help to integrate them more effectively into the landscape.
- limit the extent and intensity of lighting to the levels required for road safety.



The A27 Trunk Road crossing of the River Adur near Lancing College, Shoreham-by-Sea

Landscape Guidelines for protecting the character of rural roads and lanes

4.10 Many rural roads and lanes bear the brunt of heavier traffic and improvements to them (together with road maintenance works) for the purposes of easing traffic flow and road safety may adversely affect landscape character. As with major transport routes, meeting this challenge is an important part of the first Strategy objective. Much can be done to mitigate the impact of highways development, improvement and maintenance affecting the character of rural roads and lanes, whilst meeting road safety requirements. Guidelines for protecting the character of rural roads and lanes include:

- respect the historic character of rural roads and lanes, notably those with sunken profiles or verges and, where possible, use designs and materials that are locally distinctive, and road surface-dressings which complement local building materials.
- minimise alteration to rural roads and, where alterations are unavoidable, generally avoid the use of kerbs, make restrained use of coloured surfacing and road markings, and keep tree and hedgerow loss to a minimum, replacing any planting unavoidably lost.
- retain and manage ecologically important road verges.
- conserve where possible traditional features such as fords and stone and brick bridges.
- minimise street lighting between and within settlements.
- keep the number of signs to a minimum, combining them, replacing redundant ones, and minimising the visual intrusion of signs.
- manage hedgerows with appropriate trimming methods, including the laying of hedges, the conservation of hedgerow trees, and new planting where appropriate.



Roadside oaks at Elsted Marsh

Landscape Guidelines for conserving historic landscapes and features

4.11 The second Strategy objective seeks to conserve and enhance historic landscape character, including the location, layout and character of the historic settlements and buildings throughout the County. The historic aspect of landscape provides a cultural dimension of great richness, often with a time-depth stretching back hundreds of years. The Historic Landscape Characterisation Project (HLC) for Sussex now well on its way to completion will add the historical dimension that has been lacking in the past, allowing a fine level of detail to be fed into the Assessment process. Guidelines for conserving historic landscapes and features include:

- identify and conserve surviving historic landscapes, recognising the particular value of those showing little change and greater time-depth, including intact historic field systems, and old lanes, tracks, drove roads, banks and ditches.
- support the conservation and enhancement of features such as old hedgerows and shaws, old lanes and tracks, drove roads, stone walls, timber signposts, stone and brick bridges, mileposts, windmills and moated farmsteads.
- promote the protection, conservation and enhancement of ancient woodlands, individual mature and ancient trees of historic importance and other distinctive tree types including pollarded trees.
- protect, conserve and enhance archaeological monuments and their settings, including ancient earthwork monuments (very many of which are prehistoric in date) using appropriate management methods including the avoidance of ploughing, manual scrub clearance and the restoration of grazing uses.
- protect important views of and from historic landmarks and their settings.



The Queen Elizabeth Oak at Cowdray Park, Midhurst

Landscape Guidelines for conserving and enhancing historic parks and gardens

4.12 West Sussex has its share of fine historic parks and gardens, including the nationally renowned Great Park at Petworth House. The best and most intact examples are contained on the *Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest* maintained by English Heritage. However, there are many other parks and gardens of note throughout the County, and the Sussex Historic Landscape Characterisation Project (HLC) is revealing remnants of many more. Conserving and enhancing these assets is an important part of the second Strategy objective. Guidelines for conserving and enhancing historic parks and gardens include:

- encourage preparation of conservation and restoration plans in accordance with existing Countryside Stewardship, the new Environmental Stewardship (entry-level and higher tier) and Heritage Lottery Fund guidelines.
- give priority to the conservation, restoration and management of parkland and garden features such as avenues and designed vistas, parkland trees, water areas, and estate boundary features (tree belts, deer pales, ha-has, arboreta, ornamental fencing and gates, and gatehouses).
- encourage where appropriate the conversion of arable parkland to pasture.
- maintain a visual relationship between buildings, parkland and the surrounding landscape.



Cowdray Ruins, Midhurst



Petworth House and Park

Landscape Guidelines for the maintenance and renewal of agricultural landscapes

4.13 The third Strategy objective seeks the maintenance and renewal of agricultural landscapes. It is a truism that farmers are the custodians of our landscapes, which they have largely been responsible for shaping over the centuries. This shaping has been dynamic. The landscapes of today would appear very strange indeed to our medieval forbears – and yet there would be points of recognition: as landscape has evolved and changed over the centuries, remnants of past systems have survived as part of an accumulating time-depth. Medieval remnants in the landscape of the Wealden basin are particularly rich and evident.

4.14 The emotional and cultural appreciation of landscape is a relatively modern phenomenon, developing strongly at the turn of the nineteenth century. There is an assumption today that the landscape does not change and that it will persist in its familiar, reassuring form. This is far from the truth. Pilot work on the Historic Landscape Characterisation Project (HLC) for Sussex shows that the landscape has changed greatly since Edwardian times when we entered the modern era of social, economic and locational freedom allowed by growing affluence and modern transport. Farming benefitted too, moving towards ever larger markets and with a corresponding diminution in agricultural labour consequent on mechanisation.

4.15 Continuous change is a keynote of modern farming and land ownership. However, future prospects for landscape and nature conservation are promising. The new types of Agri-Environmental Scheme, whereby farmers and landowners may receive payments in exchange for environmental improvement works, has been widely acclaimed, and much is hoped of it. Guidelines for the conservation of agricultural landscapes are bound to be general in a Strategy of this nature. However, they attempt to span the breadth of issues and concerns, and include:

- support agricultural reform which benefits landscape character, local distinctiveness and wildlife.
- encourage take-up of Agri-Environmental Schemes.
- devise a Land Management Information System (LaMIS) or equivalent for West Sussex to provide a “one stop” easily accessible source of landscape and other environmental information for farmers and landowners.
- work in partnership with farmers and landowners, including the large estates in West Sussex, to produce comprehensive land management and whole farm plans which take account of the landscape implications of replacing traditional arable crops by new ones; contain measures to conserve and improve the landscape and wildlife habitats; and facilitate public enjoyment of the agricultural landscape.
- encourage and promote measures to support agricultural methods (including organic farming) where these will reduce agri-chemical and other pollution, and avoid damage to wildlife and habitats.
- support ecologically sound farm diversification schemes appropriate to maintaining countryside character including the widespread use of woodland as a renewable energy source.
- support local produce initiatives where this tends to reinforce distinctiveness in the landscape, for instance, the breeding of traditionally local grazing livestock.

Landscape Guidelines for improving the rural urban fringe

4.16 The rural urban fringe is that area of land surrounding the settlements of the County. In many areas, the agricultural landscape in particular is evidently degraded and opportunities are not always realised to link settlements with countryside nearby and areas further afield. The County Council and its partners are aware of the vision for connecting town and country in the pursuit of sustainable development contained in *The Countryside in and around Towns* published by the Countryside Agency and the Groundwork Trusts in January 2005. The vision encourages a whole view of the rural urban fringe, seeking co-ordinated effort through area action plans and other initiatives. The pursuit of this integrated view is therefore an important part of the third Strategy objective. Guidelines for improving the rural urban fringe include:

- give priority to landscape enhancement on the fringes of urban areas where the landscape is degraded and where there are pressures for development, recreation and other new land uses.
- encourage the planting of new woodlands and hedgerows where appropriate to reinforce existing or former landscape character, and create and enhance wildlife habitats.
- encourage the preparation of community-led landscape and environmental improvement strategies for key urban fringe areas.
- respect and incorporate intact historic landscape and visible archaeological features within landscape enhancement schemes, so promoting a sense of place and continuity.



Urban fringe landscape adjoining Gatwick Airport

Landscape Guidelines for the management of land used for horses

4.17 The keeping and exercising of horses for recreation is a modern phenomenon which brings with it implications for land use and landscape. The use of land for this purpose tends to be concentrated (though not exclusively) in the rural urban fringe. Unless attention is paid to the quality and appropriateness of fencing, stabling and storage associated with horse-riding, the activity may have a deleterious affect on the landscape. The third Strategy objective therefore seeks to address the issues associated with this singular land use. Guidelines for the management of land used for horses include:

- encourage management practices on existing paddocks and larger equestrian sites which avoid overgrazing, benefit hedgerow conservation and renewal and protect trees and woodland, avoid unsightly fencing, and encourage the removal of highly visible equipment when it is not being used.
- encourage new hedge planting outside unsightly fence lines.
- encourage the re-use of existing buildings and locate new buildings deemed necessary in close association with existing ones.



Horses grazing under the downs at Amberley

Landscape Guidelines for conserving and enhancing existing woodlands

4.18 The fourth Strategy objective concerns the conservation and enhancement of semi-natural habitats including securing the future of woodlands, hedgerows and trees as distinctive landscape features.

4.19 West Sussex is the second most wooded county in England. In large parts of it woodland is the essence of the landscape, including a high rate of survival of ancient woodland (woodland established on the same site for at least 1000 years) compared with almost any other county. Formerly managed as a major rural resource – for timber, fuel for the iron industry, charcoal, wood products, grazing areas and the like – much of the woodland today is unmanaged, as traditional woodland practices such as coppicing have greatly reduced. The Strategy therefore places great importance on the conservation and enhancement of the woodland we have inherited (for instance, the *UK Biodiversity Action Plan* includes targets to restore back to native woodland by 2020 substantial areas of Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS)). Guidelines for conserving and enhancing existing woodlands include:



Woodland management at The Haven, near Billingshurst

- conserve and enhance woodlands as a major contribution to protecting the unique landscape character of West Sussex as well as for their environmental, wildlife, historic, economic, and cultural importance.
- prioritise the restoration of neglected coppice, and the conservation of high forest, wood pasture, and ghyll and sandrock woodlands.
- promote traditional woodland industries and crafts as a sustainable use of woodlands, especially for coppice and restoration.
- encourage woodland management planning.

- promote the protection, conservation and enhancement of ancient woodlands, individual mature and ancient trees of historic importance and other distinctive tree types including pollarded trees.
- protect trees and woodland where appropriate using Tree Preservation Orders and designations.
- preserve ancient features of relict woodland management, such as woodland and woodland pasture boundary banks, and the numerous relict features of ancient Wealden ironworking, for instance, groups of minepits (iron ore extraction pits), earth- and tree-covered slag mounds, remains of artificial watercourses and earthwork pond bays (former dams to streams, now breached).
- preserve ancient land boundary banks surviving within present-day woodland, such as former park boundaries and parish boundary banks.
- encourage natural regeneration of woodland where this is considered desirable from wildlife and landscape viewpoints.
- continue to encourage an integrated approach to the restoration and re-stocking of storm-damaged woodlands.
- promote the use of native plant species of local provenance typical of each national Character Area.
- encourage the restructuring of conifer woodland to incorporate a broadleaved element, especially on ancient woodland sites, around the fringes of woodlands, and along ridges and streams.
- where appropriate, restore heathland as part of the fabric of woodland areas.
- encourage the appropriate management of shelterbelts by expanding the range of tree and shrub species and removing over-mature conifers where necessary.



Chestnut coppice on the Cowdray Estate, Midhurst

Landscape Guidelines for establishing new woodlands

4.20 In line with the Forestry Commission Regional Forestry Framework *Seeing the Wood for the Trees* published in March 2004, the fourth Strategy objective encourages new broadleaved woodland planting to strengthen and complement existing landscapes. Guidelines for establishing new woodlands include:

- encourage the creation of new, multi-purpose broadleaved woodlands that complement the shape and scale of the surrounding landscape whilst conserving unimproved meadows, heathlands, and historic field patterns or other archaeological features.
- encourage the extension of existing woodland and re-connect fragmented or isolated woods.

Landscape Guidelines for the conservation of trees

4.21 Despite the past ravages of Dutch Elm Disease which all but removed the English Elm and other elm species as specimen trees from the countryside of southern Britain, individual trees and tree groups continue to be important and widespread feature of the West Sussex landscape. Conservation of them is therefore a vital part of the fourth Strategy objective. Field and hedgerow trees are characteristic of many parts of the County, as are trees and tree groups on skylines and specimen trees of great character or age, some of them with historic associations. However, owing to disease and old age, many of these trees are dying. They require to be replaced if the characteristic landscape is to continue. Guidelines for conserving trees include:

- promote programmes for the planting of new specimen trees on farmland.
- protect trees from loss and damage (including, where appropriate, the use of Tree Preservation Orders) and conserve existing field and hedgerow trees.
- encourage the retention of stag-headed oaks and other dying trees for wildlife purposes and plant new trees to succeed them, to ensure a varied age class within the tree population.
- promote the conservation of prominent trees on skylines, along roadsides and in villages.
- promote the protection, conservation and enhancement of individual mature and ancient trees of historic importance and other distinctive tree types including pollarded trees, and those in parkland avenues and in churchyards.



Woodland coppice management: cutting fenceposts

Landscape Guidelines for conserving and increasing hedgerows and shaws

4.22 Hedgerows and shaws (broad woodland belts left behind when fields were cut out of woodland) are a strong, defining characteristic of much of the County. The County Council's thirty-year record of land use and habitat change shows the persistence of dense, intricate networks of hedgerows and shaws throughout much of the Low Weald (except where significant Parliamentary enclosure and twentieth century hedgerow removal occurred) and within the non-wooded parts of the High Weald and some areas of the Greensand ridges. However, strong hedgerow patterns are not characteristic either of the South Downs or of much of the South Coast Plain although in both areas there are exceptions that prove the rule, in the lower downland valleys and slopes and on parts of the Manhood peninsula.

4.23 The conservation (and increase in the length) of hedgerows and shaws in many areas of the County is therefore an important part of the fourth Strategy objective. Guidelines include:

- conserve, enhance or restore the hedgerow and shaw network to reinforce existing field patterns and enhance the character and unity of the landscape.
- conserve hedges that may not fulfil the criteria of the Hedgerows Regulations including prominent hedges and those along roadsides.
- manage hedges to ensure they are stockproof, visually interesting and valuable for wildlife by using traditional management methods including hedge-laying, coppicing and trimming, rather than repeated, severe cutting back.
- encourage an increase in new hedgerow trees by retaining self-sown saplings and planting new trees.
- establish new hedgerows and fill gaps in fragmented ones, ensuring mixes of numerous native shrub and tree species typical of each national Character Area, good width and density, with associated banks and ditches appropriate to local character.



Newly-laid hedge

- attempt to link hedgerows wherever possible to create wildlife corridors.
- ensure that resources are available for the care and maintenance of all new planting.
- support the objectives and targets of the *Sussex Hedgerow Habitat Action Plan*.
- retain existing ancient field and driveway bank and ditch boundaries.

Landscape Guidelines for conserving and increasing the area of chalk grassland and heathland

4.24 The fourth Strategy objective seeks to conserve and enhance all semi-natural habitats in the County, all of which contribute to landscape character and local distinctiveness. Chalk grassland is a particularly distinctive habitat in West Sussex.

4.25 Chalk grassland and heathland were relatively common at the turn of the century. The County Council and its partners are actively involved in preparing and implementing *Biodiversity Action Plans* aiming at large-scale and widespread renewal of these – and other – valuable and attractive habitats, with benefits both to wildlife and the landscape. Guidelines for conserving and increasing the area of chalk grassland and heathland include:

- promote the retention and appropriate management of chalk grassland and heathland, targeting the largest areas for active management.
- Significantly increase the area of these habitats, particularly by linking and extending existing areas, through programmes of land management (for example, in agri-environment schemes and through woodland restructuring and management).



Chalk grassland on the slopes of The Trundle, near Goodwood



Heathland restoration at Blackdown Hill

Landscape Guidelines for conserving river environments, ponds, other water bodies, wetlands and coastal habitats

4.26 Water bodies form a wide variety of types in many different kinds of locations, most of them having value for wildlife, some particularly so. Their conservation is an important part of the fourth Strategy objective. As well as on the coast (where the County Council and its partners are pursuing Shoreline Management Plans), water bodies and wetland also contribute strongly to landscape character, particularly the form and aspect of rivers and streams, the particular qualities of freshwater marsh, and the presence of ponds of varying types and sizes, from dewponds to artificial hammer ponds and reservoirs. Measures to conserve and increase freshwater marsh and ponds are particularly important, as these habitats are in decline. The County Council and its partners will continue to liaise closely with the Environment Agency with regarding the landscape implications of implementing inland flood management strategies. Guidelines for conserving water environments include:

- support initiatives which restore, conserve and enhance the natural features of river and stream environments, including river and stream edges and the diversity of features such as meanders, shallows, backwaters, and small river cliffs.
- support the use of “soft” engineering techniques where channel protection and modification works are deemed essential.
- encourage the inclusion of appropriate semi-natural habitats between improved farmland, development and the edges of watercourses.
- enhance the appearance and setting of watercourses by using varied bank profiles, and where appropriate riverside trees, wet woodland and scrub, in keeping with local landscape character.
- re-instate where possible natural watercourse alignments, reintroducing features such as meanders, cut-offs and multiple courses, whilst respecting and promoting understanding of the visible traces of ancient water management and water transport systems, such as water meadow ditch systems, ancient mill ponds and mill races, Wealden furnace and forge ponds, spillways and tailraces and disused canal cuts and lock chambers.
- pursue traditional methods of ditch clearance on a “little and often” basis, ensuring wildlife diversity using a range of channel widths and depths.
- maintain the banks of watercourses on a rotational basis to avoid clearance of vegetation over extensive stretches.
- protect, conserve and enhance village ponds, other ponds and open areas of water, and dewponds, taking account of the specific conservation requirements for each kind of pond feature.
- conserve and enhance traditional grazing marshes and water meadows by appropriate water level and livestock grazing management.
- encourage the conservation of ponds and areas of open water, restoring where possible neglected ponds on farmland and in villages whilst retaining ancient features of former pond use, such as pumps and sluices.
- support initiatives which protect, conserve and enhance other kinds of wetland (for example, bogs, marshes, wet meadows), and tidal and coastal habitats.

Landscape Guidelines for landscape renewal and wildlife conservation on field margins and land set aside

4.27 Environmental Stewardship, the new types of Agri-Environmental Scheme and various small- and large-scale habitat creation initiatives provide significant opportunities for habitat and landscape renewal. Opportunities for such renewal are an important part of the fourth Strategy objective. Guidelines for landscape renewal and wildlife conservation within fields include:

- encourage as funded options in Agri-Environmental Schemes the establishment of substantial field margins comprising herb-rich semi-natural grassland to help minimise damage to hedges and other sensitive landscape features and habitats, and to assist habitat creation.
- encourage as funded options in Agri-Environmental Schemes the adoption of semi-natural wildlife habitats (including space for arable weeds and field corner copses) at the heads of fields (“conservation headlands”).
- encourage the management of land that is set aside from agriculture in ways which benefit local landscape character, heritage and wildlife.



Pond restoration at The Haven, Billingshurst

Landscape Guidelines for the conservation of orchards

4.28 Orchards and other prominent agricultural features such as hopyards are a defining characteristic of many parts of the landscape of the South East (although large commercial hopyards and the characteristic oast houses associated with them are a relatively recent phenomenon in the history of our landscape). Since the war, the acreage of commercial orchards in the County – as elsewhere – has declined to the point where these are no longer a strong landscape characteristic. Nevertheless, there is much interest in preserving local fruit species, marketing them, and making commercial orchards, however small, a going concern, thereby maintaining landscape diversity. Supporting this renewal is therefore an important part of the fourth Strategy objective. Guidelines for the conservation of orchards include:

- promote the conservation and enhancement of traditional orchards as distinctive landscape features.
- promote the planting of new orchards emphasising locally distinctive fruit varieties, as well as nationally-known and continental varieties.



Apple orchard in the Low Weald



*Under the South Downs:
Bugshill Lane, Bepton*

*The pastoral landscape of
the Low Weald*