

## Chapter 3 Theme 2: Farming and Land Management

*"I like to look at the winding side of a great down, with two or three numerous flocks of sheep on it, belonging to different farms; and to see, lower down, the folds, in the fields, ready to receive them for the night."*

William Cobbett (1763-1835)

### Agriculture

3.1 Farmland and woodland dominate the landscape of the North Wessex Downs. Changes in these land uses have a major influence on the natural beauty of the area. Land-based enterprises play a significant role in acting as stewards of the landscape and contributing to an economic balance for communities. Additionally, equine activities and field sports are significant in terms of land use and management.

3.2 With 84% of the North Wessex Downs classified as farmland [of which in 2017 about 48% was under arable cultivation], agriculture is the dominant land use and the major influence on landscape character and quality. [The agricultural workforce totalled 2,426 which amounted to 4.9% of the actively employed people in the National Landscape (2011 Census)]. This appears to be a decline from 5.9% (reported in 2005), but remains a relatively high proportion compared with the average of 1.3% for South East England.

3.3 Annual farm census statistics since 1990 indicate land in the National Landscape in agricultural management appears to be fairly stable, with a slight net loss over time. This could be due to development but also changes in holding distributions may represent a move to other land uses not classified as agricultural. The total number of farms is also falling. The highest proportion of farms now exceed 100 hectares, a number that has steadily increased over the last decade. DEFRA defines farm types for a holding as the crop or livestock enterprise (or group of enterprises) that contributes more than two thirds of the total standard gross margin for the holding. The North Wessex Downs have quite large areas of Grade 1 and 2 agricultural land, a high proportion of which is put down to potatoes and field scale vegetables around the Pewsey Vale. [Data from Natural England's 2018 'Provisional Agricultural Land Classification' indicates that most farms fall in the 'cereals' and 'lowland grazing livestock' categories.]

3.4 Sustainable agriculture can help to protect and enhance the natural resources that have created the rich diversity and natural beauty of the North Wessex Downs. Supporting farmers in adopting Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMS) and working with farmer-led groups are vital strategies for securing landscape management, as demonstrated through the DEFRA-funded Farming in Protected Landscapes programme.

[3.5 Previous analysis of trends indicated a decline in livestock farming and greater sensitivity of arable production to prices of inputs. As with other sectors, consolidation could lead to larger farms and larger herd sizes to seek increases in efficiency. However, in some instances the North Wessex Downs National Landscape has seen, and may continue to see, reductions in herd and flock size due to efficiencies. For example, by harnessing new technologies with support from the Farming Equipment and Technology Fund, dairy farmers are able to reduce herd size while maintaining or even increasing production. The Fund has also supported sheep farmers in subsidising electronic identification (EID) readers, allowing farmers to better identify unproductive ewes and remove them from flocks. There have also been positive changes driven by the implementation of targeted agri-environment schemes.]

3.6 'Conventional' farming is predominant in the National Landscape. There are also a good number of organic farms and some biodynamic farms. There is an increasing interest in 'regenerative agriculture', which promotes minimising soil disturbance, maximising crop diversity, keeping the soil covered, maintaining a living root system and integrating livestock.

3.7 The introduction of ELMS (environmental land management schemes) is a key driver to help deliver conservation for wildlife, soils and water quality. The majority of farmers within the North Wessex Downs have entered into one or more of the schemes and there is a strong commitment by farmers to utilise these schemes. The Farming in Protected Landscapes programme (FiPL) has demonstrated this, with over 54% of the landscape engaging with the programme, showing farmers are willing to apply for and deliver goods that support People, Place, Climate and Nature. The need for farmers to deliver 'public goods for public money' has also required farmers to respond more readily to world market conditions. Fluctuations in commodity prices and input costs are increasing uncertainty for future arable profitability. There is a risk that such market influences could thwart initiatives designed to improve natural resource protection and environmental enhancement. An example in the North Wessex Downs has been the difficulty in promoting arable reversion to chalk grassland under higher-level stewardship schemes in the context of fluctuation in cereal prices.

3.8 The Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS) has been designed to support the rural economy while achieving the goals of the Government's Environmental Improvement Plan and a commitment to net zero carbon emissions by 2025. Climate change is likely to be a key consideration in terms of the types and varieties of viable crops that are grown in on the North Wessex Downs in the future. Farmers and landowners will also need to consider flood mitigation and, where possible, consider adopting natural flood management, which is also being supported through ELMS. There are implications for sowing dates, irrigation, pests, diseases, water availability and soil erosion. Increased productivity needs careful management to maintain landscape character and realise the opportunities to expand wildlife habitats. There may also be diversification into novel crops and farming systems, or change of use from agriculture to other land uses, such as equestrian businesses and leisure.

3.9 Soils are increasingly being recognised as one of our most valuable resources (see the Natural Resources chapter). Farmers and land managers being encouraged, through ELMS, to preserve and protect soils as much as possible, for example through incorporating herbal leys to ensure the soil is covered at all times, while adding organic matter. Minimum or no tillage to limit soil disturbance is also being supported through other grants, such as the Farming Equipment and Technology Fund. Through increasing soil organic matter, soils can sequester more carbon, reduce nitrogen inputs and help farmers/land managers mitigate against climate change issues such as flooding and periods of drought. Private finance companies are also emerging, further supporting efforts to increase soil organic matter for carbon credits.

## Trees and Woodland

3.10 The Forestry Commission's National Forest Inventory data show that the area of woodland within the North Wessex Downs stands at [21,757.85ha ( 12.57%of the total National Landscape area).] Just under half of this woodland has some form of wildlife designation and a little over a third is Ancient Woodland. [Broadleaf trees dominate, at just under 70% of all woodland.] Despite an increasingly healthy market for timber and wood fuel, much woodland in the National Landscape still suffers from a lack of management, often due to difficulty of access. The ageing beech woods no longer produce significant volumes of timber and are more valuable as places for recreation than as a productive part of the rural economy. The continued promotion of wood as a renewable fuel may stimulate improved management of some woodlands. There are now ELMS options that include woodland management plans, as well as the availability of grants to assist with some of the associated cost of ash die-back.

3.11 The National Forest Inventory indicates that managed woodland within the National Landscape recorded as being managed has increased from [50% in 2013 to 62% in 2017.] This is a positive change which probably reflects the increasing demand for wood fuel in particular. The timber quality of much of the woodland area within the National Landscape is not high; many of the woods are extremely small, and a number of them comprise crops for which there is no longer a viable market. Consequently, the economics of forestry operations are problematic. There is a role for energy production in helping to manage small woods. Previously, progress was made in supporting the North Wessex Downs forestry sector through initiatives such as the EU-funded LEADER programme, but since that ended there has been less activity.

[Table 1 and 2 to be updated]

3.12 The priority is to maintain and improve management of existing woodland, particularly that designated for its nature conservation interest and all ancient and semi-natural woodland. There is limited scope for new planting given the landscape, heritage and biodiversity characteristics for which much of the North Wessex Downs is designated. There is more scope for hedge restoration in suitable locations, increasing the population of large hedge trees, management of scrub as part of a habitat mosaic, reintroduction of important species such as disease-resistant elm, restoration and creation of wood pasture habitat, promoting new generations of veteran trees, riparian planting for shade in response to higher temperatures, and sensitively located and designed agro-forestry. Any new woodland should meet the objectives of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape Nature Recovery Plan and tree guidance. New woodland can act as a buffer to protect this resource and create wildlife corridors between woods, and which may in turn benefit natural flood management and water quality. The National Landscape Partnership encourages woodland owners to produce management plans in accordance with the UK Forestry Standard.

3.13 The dangers to trees from pests and diseases are growing, with ash die-back (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*, also known as Chalara) and oak processionary moth (*Thaumetopoea processionea*) being two recent examples. Ash die-back is likely to have a major impact in woodland across England, including in the North Wessex Downs, and it will be prudent to consider promoting measures to mitigate the consequences of the loss of this important tree species for wildlife and the landscape. Damage to woodland from increasing deer populations or from squirrels is an ongoing problem, especially since it makes

growing native broadleaved trees for timber difficult in spite of strong market demand. This highlights the need for collaborative landscape-scale protection of our woodland.

3.14 Climate change may lead to drought and reduced summer rainfall, which could significantly impact the woodlands of the North Wessex Downs. For instance, beech trees, which have shallow roots and struggle in dry soils, are likely to decline. In contrast, small-leaved lime trees, which require warmth to set seed, may thrive and become more prevalent. Veteran trees of all species are more likely to be felled by storm force winds. However, in woods the impact of these storms can be positive, creating glades that species adapted to sunlight can occupy. The impact of higher autumn and winter rainfall may be partly mitigated by planting, for example reducing soil run-off to rivers by hedge planting and management to interrupt overland flows. The recreational value of woodland may increase as people seek shade in the hottest months.

## Horse Industry

3.15 Horse owning and riding is a popular activity across the south of England. The North Wessex Downs is recognised as a nationally important horse-racing centre, second only to Newmarket, and the Lambourn area and other racing yards in the National Landscape make a significant contribution to the local economy. [The equestrian sector is estimated to have contributed £4.3 billion of consumer spending to the national economy in 2015 (an increase from £3.8bn in 2011), and just under £330,000 per year to Hampshire's local economy supporting many small businesses in the county (source: BHS).]

3.16 The North Wessex Downs is home to a range of important non-racing equestrian events, such as the annual Barbury Horse Trials. While there are no statistics to quantify horse ownership and riding in the National Landscape, it is evident that the network of bridleways and routes linked to The Ridgeway National Trail are popular and well-used. How horses are cared for and the developments associated with keeping and training horses can have a significant impact on the character and quality of the National Landscape, and horse owners have an important role to play in maintaining the natural beauty of the North Wessex Downs. The North Wessex Downs Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme has included well-received events providing advice to help ensure equine care and management makes a positive contribution to the landscape.

## Field Sports

3.17 Commercial shooting has had a significant influence on the landscape, especially in the downland. Much of the management of some small-scale woodland has been motivated by shooting, while the downs and valleys, notably the steep scarps, provide an ideal landscape for partridge shooting. This has led to the planting of large blocks of maize cover crop and complemented grant-aided conservation plots such as wild birdseed mix. After a turbulent couple of years, with the Covid lockdown followed by avian influenza restricting egg imports, along with rising costs for shooting (bird prices, feed, maize and labour costs) a proportion of smaller shoots and farm shoots have ceased shooting. Some shoots across the landscape are now taking action to mitigate risk by growing less maize cover and taking up agri-environment options such as wild bird seed mixes. Gamekeepers are increasingly playing an important role in the National Landscape, through predator control, deer management, woodland management and supplementary winter feeding of birds. Shooting also facilitates additional visitors to the landscape and generates significant revenue for local businesses. The shooting industry is being encouraged to 'self-regulate' by joining schemes such as *Aim to Sustain*.

3.18 Fly fishing is also an important feature of the National Landscape, especially the world-famous chalk streams such as the Kennet and Lambourn. Income from net fishing supports the conservation and restoration of these rivers and their unique ecology, fostering local tourism that benefits nearby businesses.

## Valued Qualities: Farming and Land Management

3.19 A landscape under the influence of **agricultural management** with typically large farmed estates, a high proportion of which are engaged in agri-environment agreements.

3.20 **Varied field patterns**; the open downlands are characterised by large regular fields, largely the product of 18th Century parliamentary enclosure, with more recent boundary removals creating vast fields, as on the Marlborough

Downs. By contrast, the Vale of Pewsey in the south west of the National Landscape is the product of Medieval clearance which created numerous, small, irregularly-shaped fields or assarts.

- 3.22 **Hedgerows** containing some mature trees in the vales and river valleys.
- 3.22 A growing forestry sector and different **types of woodland**, many with public access. Although oak and, historically, ash are the main forest canopy species, there is a wide range of stand types including hornbeam coppice, oak/ash stands, hazel/oak stands, and birch and ash/wych elm coppice. The long-term impact of ash die-back on the landscape is still unclear.
- 3.23 **Equestrian activity**, including the 'Valley of the Racehorse' in the Lambourn area that attracts visitors and businesses.
- 3.24 Significant land management for **field sports**, including highly valued game fishing which supports the native brown trout.

## Farming and Land Management: Key Issues, Priorities and Policies

### Key issues

3.25 **Key issues** with the potential to have significant influence on the National Landscape's Farming and Land Management Valued Qualities:

- a) The need to manage resources to achieve sustainable consumption and production.
- b) Potential for significant investment of public funding to promote diversification and micro-enterprise in the land management sector which align with National Landscape objectives.
- c) Potential for farmers to work collaboratively to enhance the delivery of public goods and services.

### Agriculture

- d) Opportunities are continuing to arise to invest in the conservation and enhancement of the National Landscape, for example through Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMS) to deliver public goods with public funds. Private funding opportunities are also beginning to emerge.
- e) Market forces and major policy changes, such as demand for increased food security or biofuels, resulting in uncertainty regarding land management, influencing the mix of farming types and farm sizes.
- f) Impacts of changes in farming technology, and energy and fertiliser prices.
- g) Shortage of livestock needed to graze downland pasture.
- h) Harnessing demand for locally produced food and drink in line with National Landscape objectives, with increasing interest in producing and marketing local food in the North Wessex Downs.
- i) Climate change risk (increasingly identified by farmers in the North Wessex Downs as a key threat and opportunity for the future) and the opportunities for land managers to invest in climate change adaptation and mitigation. Flooding continues to have a significant impact on land management, with crops becoming waterlogged.
- j) Potential for improved availability, co-ordination and consistency in the provision of agricultural land management advice to achieve National Landscape objectives.
- k) Poor agricultural land management practices, including in livestock grazing and arable production, resulting in detrimental impacts on watercourses from nutrient run-off and silt pollution, sometimes as a result of livestock damage to river banks.
- l) Soil management plays a key role in sustaining the landscape, with best practices in maintaining, conserving and improving soils crucial in mitigating against climate change and providing long term sustainability for arable production.
- m) Risk to agriculture from diseases such as bovine tuberculosis, avian influenza and bluetongue.

### Trees and Woodland

- n) Scope for more and better management of woodland in the National Landscape, especially smaller woods, to improve habitat for wildlife and provide an economic return.
- o) Risk of harmful impacts on wildlife, archaeology and recreation from increasing exploitation of woodland to meet demand for timber, if not done in an environmentally sensitive way.
- p) Opportunities for better co-ordination of forestry with agricultural land management under new environmental management schemes.
- q) Widespread threats from pests and disease (e.g. Phytophthora and Chalara).
- r) Rising deer numbers inhibiting the natural regeneration of some woodland and suppressing the ground flora. Deer Management Groups are helpful but are insufficient on their own to control deer numbers.

### Horse Industry

- s) Small-scale changes to the smooth, rolling landform around new buildings, which cumulatively have an adverse effect on the character of the National Landscape.
- t) Opportunities to support the racing industry, ancillary businesses and local communities through diversification, e.g. in responsible tourism.
- u) Need to avoid the loss of biodiversity arising from the creation of new fields and paddocks on open chalk downland by promoting opportunities for landscape enhancement through equine habitat management, such as creation of wildflower-rich grassland.
- v) Change in landscape character by the replacement of hedgerows with fencing, leading to the ‘suburbanisation’ of landscape.
- w) Pressure to widen and straighten minor roads and tracks to improve vehicle access, leading to erosion of landscape character “ and sense of place.
- x) Loss of integrity of historic settlements/hamlets/farmsteads.

## Priorities

### 4.26 Farming and Land Management Priorities

1. Focus, facilitate and support landscape-scale conservation and land management initiatives that support the purposes of National Landscape designation.
2. Promote National Landscape priorities for targeting and investment in rural land management and development to take advantage of changes arising from the agricultural transition following Brexit.
3. Support the restoration of ancient woodland and creation and restoration of wood pasture, improved management of unmanaged and under-managed woodland across the North Wessex Downs, promoting multiple benefits, including landscape character, wildlife, local economy and skills, recreation and climate change mitigation.
4. Support traditional and emerging land-based enterprises and their markets that respect and promote the special qualities of the North Wessex Downs and its setting.
5. Promote and support sustainable best practice initiatives for farming, woodland management and all country sports.
6. Encourage and support farms/estates to take up ELMs in ways that support National Landscape objectives.

#### 4.27 Farming and Land Management Policies

- FLM 01** Encourage national, regional and local land management policies to be consistent with the purpose of National Landscape designation.
- FLM 02** Encourage and support joint working and expansion/replication of existing landscape-scale nature recovery and land management projects, both within and beyond the National Landscape, to assist in the delivery of National Landscape and Big Chalk objectives.
- FLM 03** Support sustainable farm diversification and multi-purpose woodland management where it achieves National Landscape objectives and accords with planning policy.
- FLM 04** Support efforts to identify future land use options that are best able to assist farm viability and reflect the environmental objectives of the National Landscape.
- FLM 05** Support local markets for local produce and the development of local supply networks.
- FLM 06** Encourage management of sites in public and tenanted ownership within the North Wessex Downs to be examples of best practice in the delivery of National Landscape objectives.
- FLM 07** Support and promote efforts across the North Wessex Downs to reduce invasive, non-native species or unsustainable populations of species where these threaten the biodiversity and sustainable management of woodland, watercourses and other habitats.
- FLM 08** Encourage the active and environmentally sensitive use of woodland resources for viable products, helping to enhance biodiversity.
- FLM 09** Support and help guide publicly funded investment in rural development.
- FLM 10** Support investment in new agricultural infrastructure and redevelopment of farm buildings where it increases the sustainability of local businesses and aligns with National Landscape purposes.
- FLM 11** Encourage awareness of the special qualities of the National Landscape among local businesses to help them understand and embrace their responsibilities alongside running a profitable enterprise.
- FLM 12** Support improved availability, quality, co-ordination and consistency in provision of land management advice across the National Landscape.
- FLM 13** Support efforts to identify and develop the skills required to care for the landscape and its special qualities, with opportunities for all to acquire such skills.
- FLM 14** Encourage and support the local provision of practical training in traditional land management and the skills necessary to deliver enhanced rural land management and business diversification with clear landscape benefits.
- FLM 15** Encourage good agricultural land management practices and adherence to good practice to contribute to resource protection, such as healthy soil management and safeguarding watercourses from nutrient run-off and silt pollution.,
- FLM 16** Support the provision of advice on integrated management of grassland to enhance biodiversity as part of equine land management practices.
- FLM 17** Support initiatives such as better routes to market, to achieve sustainable deer populations across the National Landscape through collaborative measures and other stakeholders.

## Farming and Land Management Support: Priorities for funding and advice by Landscape Character Type

National Landscape Management Plans have a role to play as the framework within which publicly and privately funded support mechanisms and other land management initiatives can be focussed and adapted to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the designated landscapes and their settings. The North Wessex Downs National Landscape Management Plan provides the lens through which national objectives for farming and nature recovery can be applied to the landscapes and valued qualities of the North Wessex Downs

To support this role, the priorities set out in the following Table identify broad priorities for environmental land management in the North Wessex Downs National Landscape and its setting.

The first column in the Table sets out a series of generic measures which could apply to more than one Landscape Character Type; subsequent columns set out measures which are aimed specifically at each of the eight Landscape Character Types (as described in Chapter 2).

**Table 1: Priorities for farming and land management support to conserve and enhance the valued qualities of the National Landscape by Landscape Character Type**

Generic aims applicable to more than one Landscape Character Type in the National Landscape	Aims specific to National Landscape Character Types	
	Open Downland	Downland with Woodland
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support a landscape-scale approach to restoring, managing, buffering, extending and connecting currently fragmented, locally characteristic habitats. These include species-rich chalk grassland, arable field habitats, wet pasture and native riparian woodland in river valleys, heathland and common land, chalk rivers and streams, traditional orchards, ancient woodland (especially Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites) and wood pasture.</li> <li>Protect archaeological sites and features, including through removal from cultivation, reducing cultivation depth, scrub management, sympathetic woodland management and protection from livestock damage as necessary.</li> <li>Adopt catchment-sensitive farming techniques across chalk river and stream catchments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restore and enhance unmanaged relict grassland and encourage greater diversity through sympathetic management.</li> <li>Maintain, and enhance existing chalk grassland habitats.</li> <li>Maintain and enhance the value of arable land and chalk grassland for priority farmland bird and arable plant species e.g. through spring sowing and winter stubbles, nesting plots, uncropped headlands, unsprayed field margins, pollen, nectar and seed mixes. Create and maintain wildlife corridors (e.g. buffer strips, beetle banks, track and byway verges), wherever possible linking a range of different habitats.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain, enhance and restore the traditional pattern of field boundaries through sympathetic hedge management, restoration of historic hedge boundaries, creation of buffer strips and promotion and management of hedgerow trees.</li> <li>Restore and enhance unmanaged relict grassland and encourage greater diversity through sympathetic management such as controlled grazing.</li> <li>Maintain, enhance and extend existing chalk grassland habitats.</li> <li>Increase the diversity of semi-improved permanent grassland, especially where adjacent or close to unimproved grassland.</li> <li>Maintain and enhance the value of arable land and chalk grassland for priority farmland bird and arable plant species (e.g. through spring sowing</li> </ul>

<p>to reduce both diffuse and point-source pollution, minimise sediment run-off into watercourses and improve water quality.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restore and maintain a coherent network of habitat corridors through sympathetic management of, in particular, the huge ecological resource represented by road verges and banks, public rights of way and National Trails across the National Landscape, harnessing their potential to form links between wildlife sites and other important habitat patches.</li> <li>• Facilitate responsible public access to the landscape in places and in ways that are compatible with maintaining the valued qualities of the National Landscape.</li> <li>• Encourage and support more wildlife-friendly management of public and private open spaces, including recreation, sports and school grounds, parks, playgrounds, golf courses, greens, allotments and commons.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the diversity of semi-improved permanent grassland, especially where adjacent or close to unimproved grassland.</li> <li>• Extend, link and buffer chalk grassland habitats e.g. through targeted arable reversion (linking existing grassland areas along ridgelines in particular), wildflower restoration of semi-improved grassland, scrub management and removal of inappropriate woodland planting.</li> <li>• Maintain the open, expansive, open landscape character by avoiding new tree and hedge planting, including small areas which can cumulatively erode the valued qualities of openness and sweeping views.</li> <li>• Protect archaeological sites and features, including through removal from cultivation, reducing cultivation depth, scrub management and protection from livestock damage as necessary.</li> <li>• Wherever possible create and maintain wildlife corridors (e.g. buffer strips, track and byway verges) across intensively managed arable and grassland, linking a range of different habitats including unimproved and semi-improved grassland and woodland.</li> <li>• Support specific advice and options for sympathetic management of land used to keep and train racehorses to enhance its value for wildlife.</li> </ul>	<p>and winter stubbles, nesting plots, uncropped headlands, unsprayed field margins, pollen, nectar and seed mixes). Create and maintain wildlife corridors (e.g. buffer strips, beetle banks, track and byway verges), wherever possible linking a range of different habitats.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extend, link and buffer chalk grassland habitats e.g. through targeted arable reversion, scrub management and removal of inappropriate woodland planting.</li> <li>• Manage existing ancient woodland sympathetically to increase structural diversity (e.g. by restoring coppice, controlling deer numbers and promoting natural regeneration).</li> <li>• Restore Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) to conserve and enhance local landscape character and biodiversity.</li> <li>• Conserve existing veteran and ancient trees with careful management and support succession of veteran tree habitat (e.g. by pollarding, including creation of maiden pollards, and identification and management of future veterans).</li> <li>• Restore, conserve and enhance designed landscapes, other historic parkland and wood pasture.</li> <li>• Conserve the intricate network of sunken and other country lanes, drove roads and tracks through sympathetic management of banks and verges.</li> </ul>
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Aims specific to National Landscape Character Types		
Wooded Plateau	High Chalk Plain	Downs Plain and Scarp
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conserve and enhance the intimate mosaic of woodland, farmland and hedges that surrounds and connects Savernake Forest and West Woods.</li> <li>• Manage existing ancient woodland sympathetically to increase structural diversity e.g. by restoring coppice, controlling deer numbers and promoting natural regeneration.</li> <li>• Restore Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) to conserve and enhance local landscape character and biodiversity.</li> <li>• Conserve existing veteran and ancient trees with careful management and support succession of veteran tree habitat for lichens and invertebrates in particular, (e.g. by pollarding, including creation of maiden pollards) and identification and management of future veterans).</li> <li>• Restore, conserve and enhance designed landscapes, other historic parkland and wood pasture.</li> <li>• encourage restoration of historic hedge boundaries and restore and enhance existing boundaries through sympathetic hedge management, creation of buffer strips and promotion and management of hedgerow trees.</li> <li>• Restore, expand/link and sympathetically manage remaining areas of heathland.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain, and enhance existing chalk grassland habitats.</li> <li>• Restore and enhance unmanaged relict grassland, encouraging greater diversity through sympathetic management.</li> <li>• Increase the diversity of semi-improved permanent grassland, especially where adjacent or close to unimproved grassland.</li> <li>• Extend, link and buffer chalk grassland habitats (e.g. through targeted arable reversion, scrub management and removal of inappropriate woodland planting).</li> <li>• Maintain and enhance the value of the mosaic of arable land and chalk grassland for priority farmland bird and arable plant species (e.g. through spring sowing and winter stubbles, nesting plots, uncropped headlands, unsprayed field margins, pollen, nectar and seed mixes). Create and maintain wildlife corridors (e.g. buffer strips, beetle banks, track and byway verges), wherever possible linking a range of different habitats.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On the Plain, encourage restoration of historic hedge boundaries and enhance existing boundaries through sympathetic hedge management, creation of buffer strips and promotion and management of hedgerow trees.</li> <li>• On the Plain, consider opportunities for sympathetic, small-scale tree-planting integrated within a network of well-managed hedges.</li> <li>• On the Plain, improve the value of the arable landscape for priority farmland birds, pollinators, arable plants and other wildlife (e.g. through spring sowing and winter stubbles, nesting plots, uncropped headlands, unsprayed field margins, pollen, nectar and seed mixes). Create and maintain wildlife corridors (e.g. buffer strips, beetle banks, track and byway verges) wherever possible linking a range of different habitats.</li> <li>• Along the Scarp, maintain and enhance the diversity and wildlife value of the farmland/woodland/chalk grassland/historic parkland mosaic.</li> <li>• Along the western Scarp, promote sympathetic management of the varied and distinctive linear wooded hangers and wooded combs.</li> <li>• Conserve, enhance and restore the ecological value of drove roads and tracks linking to Open Downland through sympathetic management of banks and verges.</li> <li>• Support realisation of the potential for The Ridgeway National Trail to serve as a conservation corridor through the landscape, encouraging ecological enhancement of land adjacent and close to The Ridgeway.</li> <li>• Conserve and enhance the monumental landscape of the Avebury World Heritage Site and its setting, including through targeted arable reversion, increasing the diversity of semi-improved permanent grassland,</li> </ul>

		scrub management and removal of inappropriate woodland planting.
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