

OUR SHARED OBJECTIVES

The Chilterns Conservation Board and the Forestry Commission will work together in partnership to deliver their shared priorities.

We will do this by:

Ensuring effective liaison

- We will hold an annual meeting between Forestry Commission and Conservation Board staff, building on the regular liaison that has resulted from the Chilterns AONB Woodlands Programme.
- The Forestry Commission will ensure officer representation on relevant AONB work groups.
- The South East England conservancy will take the lead and ensure any regional variation in policies, initiatives or support mechanisms that arise from the Regional Forestry Frameworks in East England and South East England are applicable across the AONB.

Assistance in the review of the AONB Management Plan

- The Forestry Commission will assist with the revision of the AONB Management Plan. The Conservation Board will seek to ensure positive woodland policies that are consistent with the England Forestry Strategy and Regional Forestry Frameworks.

Promotion of sustainable woodland management

- We will provide directly, and support, management advisory services to owners and managers, concentrating on the protection and enhancement of the landscape, amenity and recreation, and sites of ecological importance and cultural heritage.
- We will jointly promote and support management of pest species including deer and grey squirrel.

The management of the Forestry Commission estate

- The Forestry Commission will fully consult on the management of its own estate during the preparation of long-term Forest Design Plans.
- The Forestry Commission will utilise its estate to demonstrate jointly with the Conservation Board best practice in woodland management applicable to the Chilterns and in the restoration of broadleaved woodland from coniferous plantations.

Raising public awareness of woodlands and their usage

- We will raise public awareness of the role of trees and woodlands in the Chilterns AONB, including their archaeological, cultural and ecological importance.
- We will promote the benefits of woodland recreation, particularly to health, and enhance access to woodland and the visitor's quality of experience.



The Chilterns AONB

The Chilterns AONB covers 833 sq km, comprising nationally and international important landscapes and habitats such as ancient woodland, chalk grasslands and chalk streams. The AONB was designated in 1965 to conserve and enhance its natural beauty.



The Chilterns Conservation Board was established in 2004 with a remit to promote the conservation and enhancement of the area. It also has a statutory purpose to help local people and visitors understand and enjoy the special qualities of the Chilterns.



The Forestry Commission

The Forestry Commission is the government department responsible for forestry in Great Britain. It works to ensure the protection and sustainable management of our woodlands.

The South East and East of England Regional Forestry Frameworks are regional expressions of the England Forestry Strategy. Produced in partnership with a range of stakeholders, they aim to provide the direction and context for the future development of woodlands and forestry in these regions.

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All photographs by John Morris, Chilterns Conservation Board, except bluebell woodland on map page by Patrick McKernan, Forestry Commission.
Local accord produced June 2006.

A LOCAL ACCORD

Between the Chilterns Conservation Board and the Forestry Commission



A JOINT ACCORD

Following the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) an accord was established between the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Forestry Commission in England.

The shared priorities were identified as:

- Securing an attractive and sustainable landscape
- Protection of existing woodlands
- Reversing the fragmentation of ancient and semi-natural woodlands
- Promoting appropriate management practices
- Gaining public confidence and support

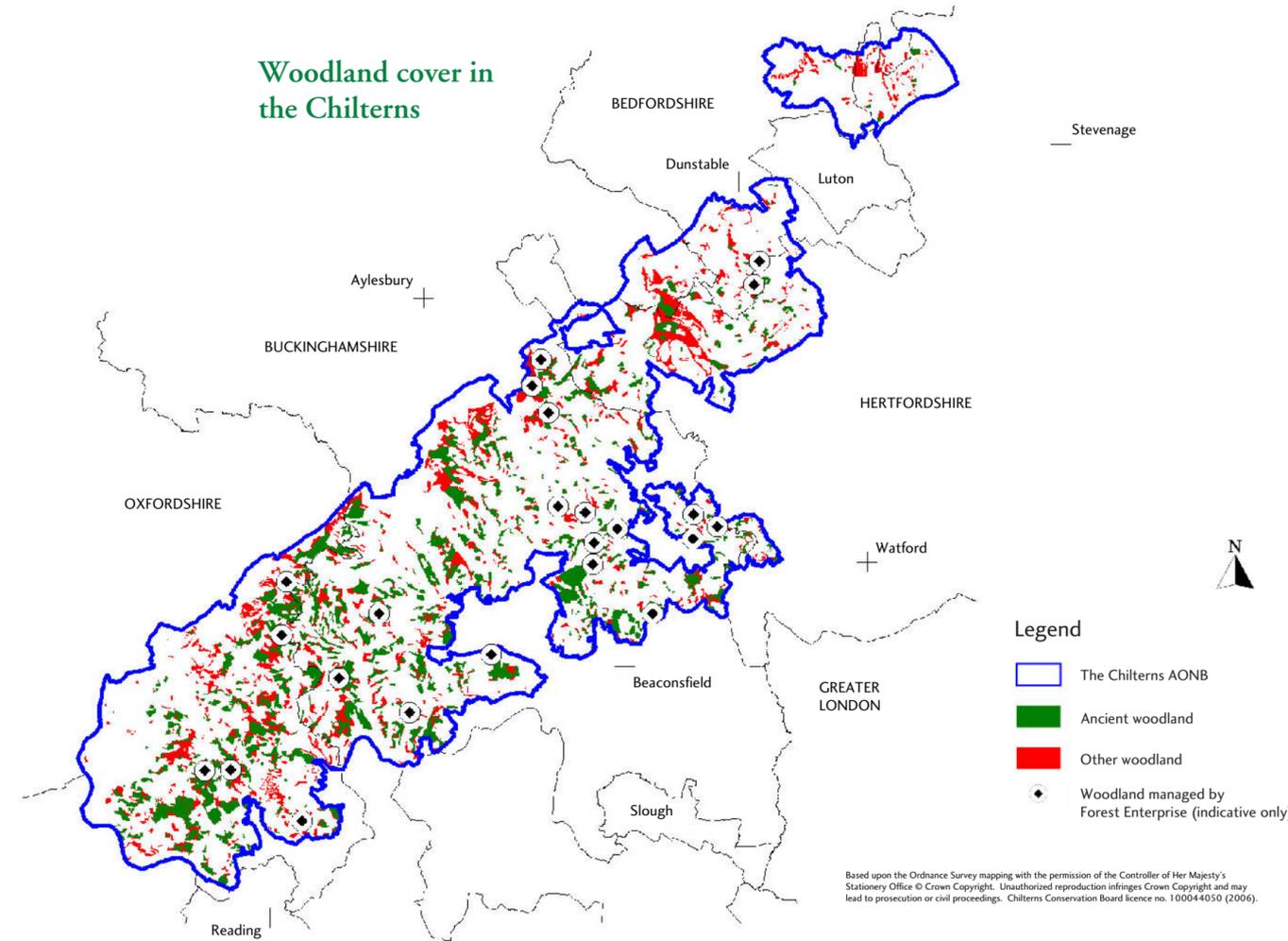


A LOCAL ACCORD

The Joint Accord encouraged the establishment of local accords between individual Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and the Forestry Commission where both parties agree that woodland issues are highly significant. These local accords seek to reflect the distinctive nature of each AONB, highlighting new opportunities for working together.

Following a number of woodland projects within the South East family of AONBs (supported jointly by the Forestry Commission and the Countryside Agency), it is now possible to identify the key issues included in this accord.

The purpose of this accord is to describe how the Chilterns Conservation Board and the Forestry Commission will work together to meet their shared objectives



The Chilterns support a rich woodland cover and are noted particularly for their beech woodlands, many of which are of national or international importance. Woodlands cover over 21% of the AONB and support many rare habitats and species. They also provide wonderful opportunities for access and recreation to local people and visitors.

The woods, once home to the chair bodgers, are abundant with the remains of man's past activities - hill forts, wood banks, charcoals hearths and sawpits.

The Chiltern beech woods were once the source of timber for a large furniture industry. Today they are more valued for their amenity, wildlife and archaeology

The Chilterns AONB Woodlands Programme arose out of the Joint Accord between the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Beauty and the Forestry Commission. Since 2004, this programme has helped define key woodland issues and shape management priorities for the AONB.

The key woodland issues for the Chilterns AONB are outlined below:

Maintaining an attractive landscape

Trees and woodlands are an integral part of the attractive landscape of the Chilterns. It is important to maintain or enhance the broadleaved character of the Chilterns, with a concentration on beech where suitable. The conversion of coniferous woodland to broadleaved will be encouraged where appropriate. Low-impact management techniques need to be promoted to maintain the quality of the landscape. There will be a general presumption against the removal of woodland. There may, however, be occasions when woodland removal for the restoration of semi-natural habitats, in particular chalk grassland, would provide overriding benefits.



Conserving wildlife

Many of the habitats and species of the Chiltern woodlands are of international importance. Recent surveys suggest the wildlife status is uncertain for many key species and further research and survey work is required, the results of which will support targeted management. The impact of climate change is still to be established but the beech woods are thought to be especially vulnerable.



Protection of archaeology and cultural heritage

The woodlands of the Chilterns are abundant with the relics of man's past activities and occupation. These are historically important and future management needs to be sensitive to their conservation and appreciation. Raising understanding and enjoyment amongst owners, managers, contractors and the general public of the historic environment found within woodlands will be a high priority. The area supports many woods and individual trees of particular cultural significance. These need to be identified, recorded and celebrated.



The promotion of recreation

The woodlands of the Chilterns are an outstanding recreational resource, with local communities and visitors enjoying some of the best access in the UK. Very few residents live more than a mile from woodland with public access. There is, however, potential to improve the quality of this experience and to encourage more people to explore the countryside and woodland close to home. Woods, particularly those near settlements, provide an excellent resource for learning and promoting health through exercise.



Timber production

The woodlands of the Chilterns have long produced useful, and in some cases valuable, renewable raw materials. Whilst the encouragement of management which will produce high quality timber will remain a priority, there is now a particular opportunity to develop the production of wood for fuel. There is also an ongoing need to manage pest species including deer and the grey squirrel.

