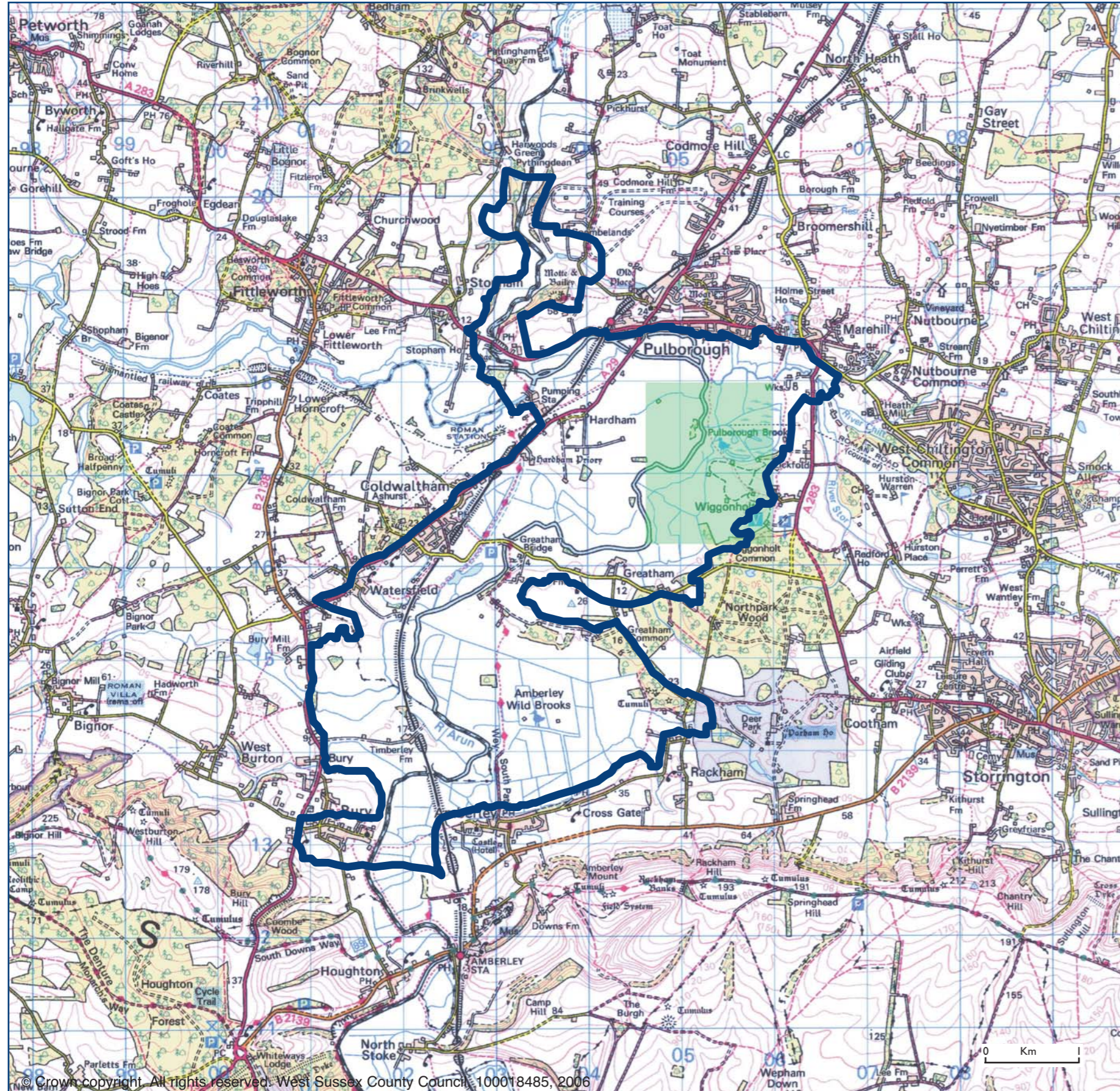


Overall Character

The Arun Wildbrooks character area, WG6, stretches between Pulborough and the South Downs. The river valley develops into a particularly large open alluvial floodplain criss-crossed by reed-filled drainage ditches, and patterned by a partial hedgerow network, patches of scrub and small isolated wet woodlands, flood meadows and pastures. The river flows within open grassy embankments but follows broad sweeping loops. River canalisation has considerably reduced the extent and incidence of flooding. These drained, somewhat peaty brooklands are known locally as 'wildbrooks'.



Sheet WG6

Arun Wildbrooks

Wealden Greensand

The area covered by the Sheet includes:

The Amberley & Pulborough Brooks (O1), and a small section of the Upper Arun Valley (P1) Landscape Character Areas as defined in the unpublished **Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment** (October 2003).

The Arun is the major river of the County. It extends from the vicinity of Horsham to the sea at Littlehampton. The river cuts across the *Low Weald*, *Wealden Greensand*, the *South Downs* and the *Coastal Plain* Regional Character Areas, giving rise to strong variations in valley side landform and tree cover. This is the basis for the division of the four Land Management Guideline Sheets SC10, WG6, SD2, and LW3.

Key Characteristics

- Wide views of middle reaches of the River Arun across broad alluvial floodplain.
- Pastoral landscape with cattle grazing.
- Small rectilinear and irregular pasture fields subject to seasonal flooding divided by reedy drainage ditches.
- Few trees or hedges.
- Widely dispersed patches of floodplain woodland.
- Sweeping river loops and abandoned meanders.
- Gentle valley sides of mixed farmland.
- Distinctive curving strips of woodland adjacent to the valley sides.
- Scattered manor houses, farmsteads and linear villages with a varied mix of building materials predominantly tile, brick, flint, half timber and sandstone.
- Distinctive stone bridges.
- Local landmark of Amberley Castle.
- Mostly tranquil unspoilt rural character.



Historic Features

- Mostly small scale historic field pattern, with some more recent straightened boundaries.
- Saxon Church at Hardham.
- Hardham Priory.
- Historic stone bridges.
- Site of Roman Bath House at Wiggonholt.
- Amberley Castle.

Biodiversity

- Extensive wet grazing marshes at Amberley Wild Brooks and wetlands of Pulborough Brooks are very important for a diverse flora, breeding and wintering waders and wildfowl.
- Very rich ditch flora.
- Water meadows ('wildbrooks') which flood and attract large numbers of wildfowl and waders in the winter months, notably at Amberley and Pulborough.
- Amberley raised bog.
- Valley side broadleaved woodlands.
- Small floodplain woodlands.

Change - Key Issues

- Potential loss of species rich grassland through intensive grassland management.
- Potential loss of wet woodland and other wetland features as a result of drainage schemes for agriculture.
- Potential introduction of new flood defence structures.
- Pressure on valley side woodland and hedgerows particularly on the edge of Amberley and Pulborough.
- Locally intrusive farm buildings.
- Loss of some pasture on floodplain due to drainage schemes.
- Potential development in the floodplain.

Landscape and Visual Sensitivities

Overall condition is considered good, reflecting the openness, and many intrinsic landscape qualities of the area. *Key sensitivities are:*

- Loss of rural character of the valley.
- Any built development in the floodplain.
- Any large scale high density built development on valley sides.
- Infrastructure development which would be visually prominent on the valley sides or affect the integrity of the floodplain.
- Unsympathetic flood defences.
- Change to open character of the floodplain.
- Change in important views including those from Pulborough and Amberley.
- Loss of wetland features.
- Change to river banks, meanders and drainage pattern.



River Arun



Greatham Bridge - stone

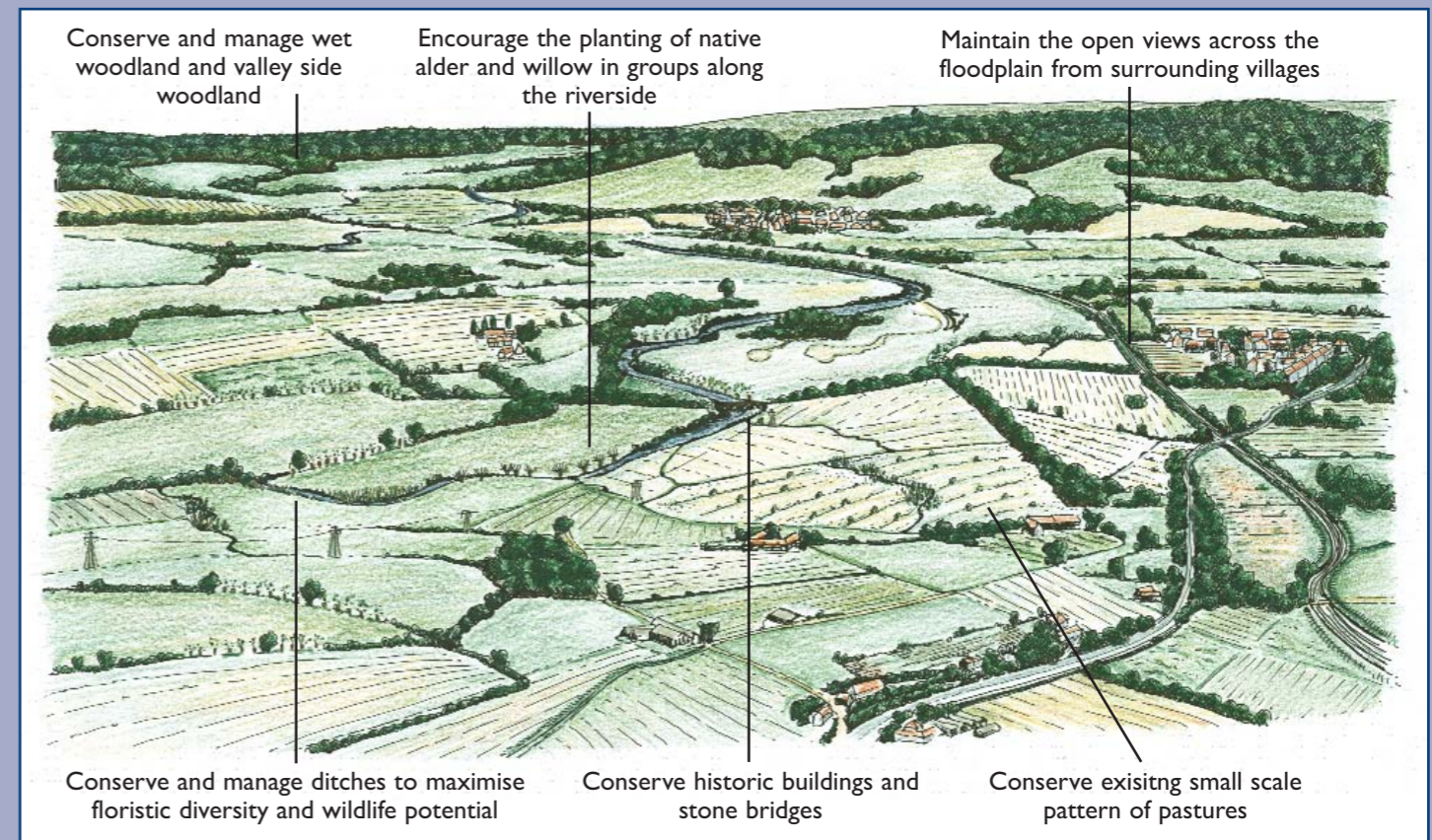


Pulborough Wildbrooks



Riverside development, Pulborough

Land Management Guidelines



Conserve the remote tranquil undeveloped character of the area and open views across the floodplain.

- Ensure road widening, creation of new crossings and introduction of engineered flood defences does not damage the remote rural character of the area.
- Ensure any small scale development of the valley sides is sited and designed to respond to the historic settlement pattern of small isolated farmsteads and small linear villages, as well as their scale, form, design and materials. It should result in no loss of key landscape features such as valley side woodlands.
- Conserve and maintain views to important landmarks such as Amberley castle.
- Conserve historic farm and manor buildings and stone bridges.
- Conserve existing small scale pattern of pastures and manage grassland for species richness.
- Encourage traditional management of flood meadows and ditches.
- Conserve and manage ditches to maximise floristic diversity and wildlife potential.
- Conserve and manage wet woodland and valley side woodland.
- Encourage the planting of native alder and willow in groups along the riverside.
- Encourage the planting of native tree and shrub groups to screen mobile home park at Houghton Bridge and modern farm buildings within the valley.
- Enhance the presence of villages through planting of occasional tree features on adjacent higher ground.
- Encourage the extension of wetland areas through the local management of water tables for visual and nature conservation value through Stewardship schemes and the Amberley Water Level Management Plan.

The Guidelines should be read in conjunction with:

- County-wide Landscape Guidelines set out in *A Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape* (November 2005) published by West Sussex County Council.
- Objectives and actions contained in the *Interim South Downs Management Plan* (March 2004) published by the Sussex Downs Conservation Board.