

## Overall Character

This Character Area lies between Fittleworth and Storrington in the middle of the County. It has a distinctive landform of low ridges alternating with shallow valleys, reflecting a complex geology of sandstone and clay. Heavily wooded ridges to the south are interspersed with small patches of heathland. Undulating, mixed farmland lies to the north with a scattering of orchards and vineyards, a network of small woodlands and a more heavily wooded northern escarpment. Despite the presence of sand quarries, abandoned glasshouses, and suburban development at Storrington, Pulborough and West Chiltington, much of the area retains a predominantly undeveloped character.

### Key Characteristics

- Low ridges with shallow valleys (ridge and vale).
- Heavily wooded ridges of large pine plantations and oak-birch woodland to the south around Storrington and Parham.
- Smaller broadleaved woods.
- Wooded northern escarpment.
- Mixed arable and pasture farmland with predominantly small to medium-sized fields with a variable density of hedgerows. Hedgerows tend to be more fragmented around arable farmlands.
- Small patches of heathland.
- Numerous small streams with fringing woodland.
- Orchards and vineyards.
- Many narrow, winding lanes, some sunken with exposed sandstone outcrops.
- Major historic parkland of Parham.
- Sand quarries.
- Small villages with many stone buildings (purple ironstones and honey coloured sandstones) and scattered cottages linked by narrow lanes.
- Localised suburban development around Storrington and West Chiltington.
- Extensive rights of way network.

## Storrington Woods and Heaths

### Wealden Greensand

The area covered by the Sheet is derived from:

The Fittleworth, Chiltington and Storrington (H2) Landscape Character Area as defined in the unpublished **West Sussex Landscape Character Assessment** (November 2003).





## Historic Features

- Route of the Roman Road of Stane Street.
- Pattern of small, irregular fields.
- Parham House, Orangery and Dovecote. Extensive deer parkland and the historic parkland around Parham House. Smaller historic parklands at Chiltington, Storrington, Little Thakeham and Warminghurst.
- Windmill remains at West Chiltington.
- Medieval churches at Warminghurst, Storrington, Pulborough, Little Thakeham, West Chiltington and Parham.
- Watermills at Hurston Place, Storrington, Nutbourne and Pulborough.
- Medieval and post medieval sand quarries.
- Roman remains. Notably Roman Villa at Borough Farm which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM).
- Bronze Age Barrow to west of Storrington.
- Parham Airfield.

## Biodiversity

- Despite a variety of habitats, biodiversity is reduced by some large areas of intensive arable farmland.
- Some ancient woodlands, notably at Parham.
- Dry and wet heaths at Parham, Storrington and West Chiltington.
- Heath woodland at Parham.
- Important streamside woodlands.
- Significant hedgerow matrix.
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) at Parham Park, Hurston Warren, Sullington Warren and Chantry Mill.
- Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) at Monkmeads Wood, Heath Common and Wiggonholt Common, West Wantley Farm Meadow.
- A few unimproved neutral grasslands.

## Change - Key Issues

- Decline in hedgerow management.
- Decline in woodland management.
- Woodland and scrub invasion of heathland.
- Increased development in major settlements such as Storrington and Pulborough.
- Introduction of suburban styles and materials.
- Pressure of new recreational uses.
- Increased traffic on major roads.
- Abandoned glasshouses.
- Localised intrusion and traffic from sand quarrying operations.

## Landscape and Visual Sensitivities

Key sensitivities are:

- Visual intrusion from increased suburban development of the edge of major settlements at Storrington, West Chiltington, Sullington and Pulborough.
- Loss of open heathland.
- Visual impact of major roads and unsympathetic road improvements.
- Localised visual intrusion, changes in landform and road improvements from sand quarrying operations.
- Loss of woodland cover or decrease in overall diversity of woodland due to poor management or plantation planting.
- Changes in land management due to new recreational uses such as golf courses.



Vineyards at Nutbourne



Heathland ridges - Hurston Warren

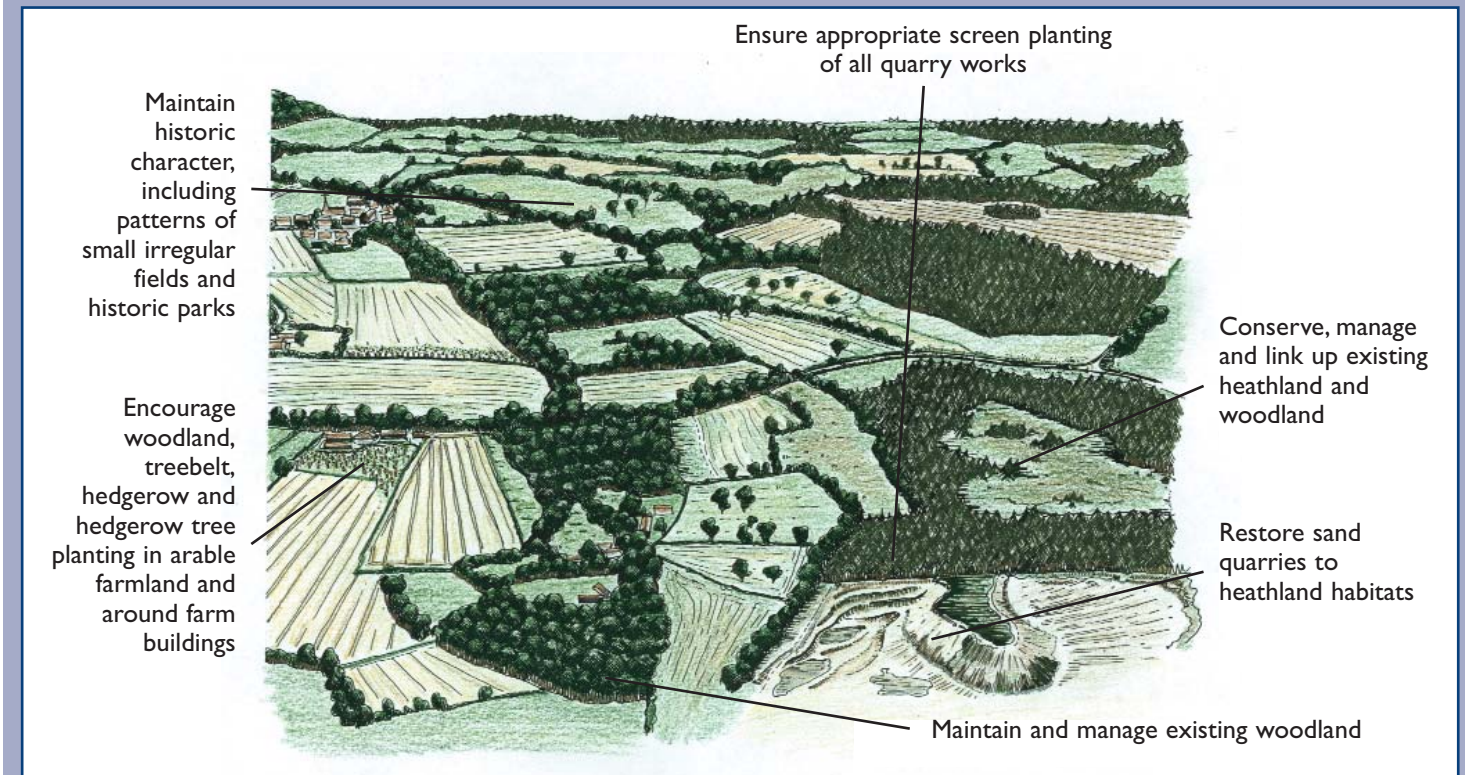


Sunken lanes - West Chiltington



Historic parkland of Parham

## Land Management Guidelines



**Conserve the rich mosaic of woodland and heathland habitats, encouraging heathland landscape restoration and woodland management. Ensure that new development is well-integrated within the landscape.**

- Conserve, manage and link up existing heathland and woodland. Maintain and manage a varied heathland landscape including bare areas, woodland, scrub and wet heath.
- Maintain historic character, including patterns of small irregular fields and historic parks.
- Conserve and enhance the predominantly undeveloped character.
- Conserve the character of narrow sunken lanes.
- Conserve and retain orchards and vineyards, and plant new ones.
- Maintain and manage existing woodlands, heathlands, and streamside woodlands to create a mosaic of heathland habitats.
- Recreate heathland wherever possible, prioritising areas which will increase connectivity.
- Encourage woodland, tree belt, hedgerow and hedgerow tree planting in arable farmland and around urban and village edges, farm buildings, industrial sites and along major roads. Aim for a wooded network.
- Encourage woodland tree planting on the low Folkestone Sand ridge along the Storrington to Washington stretch of the A283.
- Ensure appropriate screening of all quarry works by planting, carried out in advance of quarrying wherever possible.
- Restore sand quarries to heathland habitats.
- Ensure that any improvements to the quarry roads are at a suitable scale to be well integrated into the ridge top viewpoints.
- Consider the cumulative impact on landscape character of small developments and land use change. Avoid the introduction of suburban styles and materials.
- Ensure any new development is well integrated into the wider landscape. Use woodland and hedgerow planting as appropriate.

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.