



**COUNCIL**

Thursday 23 March 2017

**GREAT BEALINGS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN (CL 15/17)**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1. The purpose of this report is to “make” the Great Bealings Neighbourhood Plan part of the development plan for the area, in light of the referendum result held on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2017 and legal considerations.
2. The referendum question asked “Do you want Suffolk Coastal District to use the Great Bealings Neighbourhood Plan to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?” More than 50% of those voting in the referendum voted “YES” to the question. Accordingly, the Council must now “make” the neighbourhood plan as soon as is reasonably practical unless it considers that this would breach or be incompatible with any EU obligation or any of the Convention Rights.
3. Once “made” the Great Bealings Neighbourhood Plan will achieve full legal status and become part of the Development Plan for the area and sit alongside the adopted Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document, the Site Allocations and Area Specific Policies Document, the Felixstowe Peninsula Area Action Plan and Rendlesham Development Plan Documents.

Is the report Open or Exempt?	Open
-------------------------------	------

<b>Wards Affected:</b>	Great Bealings
------------------------	----------------

<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Tony Fryatt – Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning
------------------------	--

<b>Supporting Officer:</b>	Hilary Hanslip Principal Planner 01394 444761 Hilary.hanslip@eastssuffolk.gov.uk
----------------------------	---

## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Great Bealings is one of a number of towns and parishes in Suffolk Coastal District to take up the opportunity to produce a neighbourhood plan for their community. It is one of three neighbourhood plans which form the second tranche of plans in Suffolk Coastal District to have reached this concluding stage in the neighbourhood plan process. The other two, Leiston and Framlingham are the subject of separate reports on this agenda. Rendlesham is the only other community to have a “made” neighbourhood plan.
- 1.2 Great Bealings is designated an Other Village in the Suffolk Coastal District Local Plan – Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document. It is not an area to which new development is directed. Consequently, the neighbourhood plan concentrates on environmental matters, (historic and natural) and design. This is summed up in its mission statement. It has also been produced without the use of a planning consultant.
- “Our aim is to maintain and enhance the special character of our small village within its natural setting while ensuring that the community who has chosen to live here can control, shape and contribute to how it evolves for the benefit of themselves, future residents and subsequent generations”*
- 1.3 Following consultation and research, Great Bealings Parish Council submitted its neighbourhood plan and supporting documentation to this Council in July 2016. The plan was subject to independent examination and the Examiner’s report was received by the Council in November 2016. The Examiner’s report recommended the plan proceed to referendum subject to a number of modifications (*see link under Background Papers*).
- 1.4 Under powers delegated to the Head of Planning and Coastal Management and in consultation with the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning, each of the recommended modifications was considered and agreed (*see link under Background Papers*). Modifications were made to the plan in line with the Examiner’s recommendations and arrangements made for the plan to proceed to referendum. In accordance with the relevant regulations, the referendum took place on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2017. Eligible voters (215) were asked to vote “yes” or “no” to the following question:
- 1.5 “Do you want Suffolk Coastal District to use the Great Bealings Neighbourhood Plan to help it determine planning applications in the neighbourhood area?”
- 1.6 The result of the referendum is as follows:
- Votes cast – 99 (44.8% turnout)
  - YES votes – 96 (97%)
  - NO votes - 3 (3%)
- 1.7 The turnout was good albeit that the number of people eligible to vote was small.
- 1.8 Where a referendum results in more than half of those voting, voting in favour of the proposal, the Council must “make” (adopt) the plan as soon as is reasonably practical unless it considers that this would breach, or be incompatible with any EU obligation or any of the Convention of Rights.
- 1.9 The results of the referendum clearly indicate that more than half of those people who voted are in favour of the plan. Nothing has changed since the Council’s earlier

consideration of the Examiners Report and modifications which would suggest that the plan would breach, or be incompatible with and EU obligation or any of the Convention of Rights.

## **2 FINANCIAL AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 2.1 The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) provide grant funding to help Local Planning Authorities support groups undertaking neighbourhood plans. In the latter part of the process, the Council is required to pay for the examiner and the referendum arrangements. A claim for £20k was submitted to DCLG in December 2016 in respect of the Great Bealings Neighbourhood plan.
- 2.2 In accordance with current CIL Regulations the Parish Council is entitled to 25% of CIL receipts from eligible development schemes permitted after the date the Neighbourhood Plan is “made”. The date a scheme is permitted is the date the planning permission is issued. For towns and parishes with no “made” neighbourhood plan, the CIL contribution to which they are entitled stands at 15%. (Details on CIL can be found via the following link <http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/community-infrastructure-levy/>)
- 2.3 Following the decision to “make” the plan, the Council is required to publish the plan, details of when and where it can be inspected, and notify any person who has asked to be notified that it has been “made” (Regulation 20)
- 2.4 A list of “saved” policies from the “old” Suffolk Coastal Local Plan which this neighbourhood plan will supersede will be included as appendix within it. The single comprehensive list showing the status of remaining (post adoption of Core Strategy July 2013) saved policies published on the Council’s website will be updated accordingly.

## **3 HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO EAST SUFFOLK BUSINESS PLAN?**

- 3.1 As a part of the Development Plan for the district the Great Bealings Neighbourhood Plan will help provide a positive contribution to the Vision in the East Suffolk Business Plan. The parish is not one where new development is promoted or required to implement the Core Strategy. It has a role in promoting a successful rural community with a particular emphasis on the quality of the local environment.
- 3.2 Enabling Communities: The Neighbourhood Plan is an example of how a community can help influence the way it develops.

## **4 OTHER KEY ISSUES**

- 4.1 This report has been prepared having taken into account the results of an Equality Impact Assessment and a Partnership Impact Assessment. The plan itself has been subject to environmental impact assessment. No issues have been raised by these assessments.

## **5 CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 The Great Bealings neighbourhood plan has been subject to consultation through its preparation. Securing and maintaining public support for a neighbourhood plan is critical to its achieving a positive result at referendum.

## **6 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 6.1 None. The neighbourhood plan has received the required vote in favour and is not considered to be in breach of, or otherwise incompatible with, any EU obligations or any of the convention of rights.

## 7 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 To formally “make” the Great Bealings Neighbourhood Plan the consequence of which is that it becomes part of the statutory development plan, thereby giving it full statutory weight in the determination of planning applications within the Great Bealings Neighbourhood Plan area as defined..

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That, subject to the inclusion of an additional appendix listing policies to be superseded by the Plan, Council approves the “Making” of the Great Bealings Neighbourhood Plan.
2. That Council approves, for ease of reference and clarification, the Great Bealings Neighbourhood Plan be re-published to include within the title, headers and footers that this is the Plan as “Made March 2017”

### APPENDICES

#### Appendix A

Great Bealings Neighbourhood Plan

### BACKGROUND PAPERS

Date	Type	Available From
March 2013	Neighbourhood Area Applications	<a href="http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Neighbourhood-Planning/Designated-Neighbourhood-Areas/Great-Bealings-Area-Determination-and-Decision-Documents/Application-letter.pdf">http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Neighbourhood-Planning/Designated-Neighbourhood-Areas/Great-Bealings-Area-Determination-and-Decision-Documents/Application-letter.pdf</a> <a href="http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Neighbourhood-Planning/Designated-Neighbourhood-Areas/Great-Bealings-Area-Determination-and-Decision-Documents/Area-map.pdf">http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Neighbourhood-Planning/Designated-Neighbourhood-Areas/Great-Bealings-Area-Determination-and-Decision-Documents/Area-map.pdf</a>
Oct 2013	Neighbourhood Area application decision notice	<a href="http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Neighbourhood-Planning/Designated-Neighbourhood-Areas/Great-Bealings-Area-Determination-and-Decision-Documents/Decision-notice.pdf">http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Neighbourhood-Planning/Designated-Neighbourhood-Areas/Great-Bealings-Area-Determination-and-Decision-Documents/Decision-notice.pdf</a>
Nov 2016	Independent examiner’s report	<a href="http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Neighbourhood-Planning/Designated-Neighbourhood-Areas/Great-Bealings-Referendum/Great-Bealings-Report-of-Independent-">http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Neighbourhood-Planning/Designated-Neighbourhood-Areas/Great-Bealings-Referendum/Great-Bealings-Report-of-Independent-</a>

		<a href="#">Examination.doc.pdf</a>
Dec 2016	SCDC consideration of recommended modifications	<a href="http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Neighbourhood-Planning/Designated-Neighbourhood-Areas/Great-Bealings-Area-Determination-and-Decision-Documents/Draft-Great-Bealings-NP-Decision-Statement.pdf">http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Neighbourhood-Planning/Designated-Neighbourhood-Areas/Great-Bealings-Area-Determination-and-Decision-Documents/Draft-Great-Bealings-NP-Decision-Statement.pdf</a>
10 Feb 2017	Referendum declaration of result	<a href="http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/elections/election-notices-and-results/suffolk-coastal-elections/great-bealings-referendum-9-february-2017/">http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/elections/election-notices-and-results/suffolk-coastal-elections/great-bealings-referendum-9-february-2017/</a>

# **Great Bealings Neighbourhood Plan**

## **A village in a landscape**

**Referendum Version**

**December 2016**

# Great Bealings Neighbourhood Plan

## *‘A Village in a Landscape’*

### ***Mission Statement***

*Our aim is to maintain and enhance the special character of our small village within its natural setting while ensuring that the community who has chosen to live here can control, shape and contribute to how it evolves for the benefit of themselves, future residents and subsequent generations.*

<i>Contents</i>	<i>Page</i>
<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. HISTORICAL CONTEXT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>3. STRATEGY AND APPROACH</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>4. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>5. BUILT ENVIRONMENT</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>6. NON-STATUTORY ANNEX</b>	Error! Bookmark not defined.
<b>7. REFERENCES – accessed 1 September 2015</b>	<b>41</b>

### ***Appendices***

- 1. Maps*
- 2. Listed Buildings*
- 3. Non Designated Heritage Assets*
- 4. SCDC Guidance on design criteria and materials*
- 5. Community Engagement Strategy*
- 6. Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire Responses*
- 7. NPPF Guidance re. Neighbourhood Planning*
- 8. Housing Needs Survey*
- 9. Landscape and Wildlife Evaluation*

### **Supporting documents**

Where not included in this full printed version of the Plan, these are published on the website, [www.gbnp.co.uk](http://www.gbnp.co.uk), with kind permission, and available from their respective publishing bodies:  
Great Bealings Neighbourhood Plan: Landscape and Wildlife Evaluation, published by Simone Bullion, Suffolk Wildlife Trust

Suffolk’s Nature Strategy, published by Suffolk County Council

Great Bealings Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire, published by Great Bealings Parish Council

Housing Needs Survey, published by Community Action Suffolk

*The Plan as a whole is published by Great Bealings Parish Council, March 2016*  
*Cover photo by Gary Farmer – thanks also to the many contributors*  
Submission Version 19.00, 8 March 2016



## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. In April 2009 the parishes of Great Bealings, Little Bealings, and Playford worked together to produce a Parish Plan. This was a valuable exercise in setting out the concerns and aspirations of those who live in the villages but it had no legal force. The circumstances have now changed however and under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)<sup>[1]</sup> and the Localism Act it is now possible to write a Neighbourhood Plan which, once formally made, has statutory force and becomes the basis for determining future planning applications in the parish in conjunction with the Suffolk Coastal District Council (SCDC) Local Plan<sup>[2]</sup>.
- 1.2. SCDC will continue to decide on planning applications but the policies in our Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan) will have statutory force and must be reflected in any decision taken by SCDC. A Neighbourhood Plan thus gives real power to the Parish Council in a way Parish Plans never could. Great Bealings Parish Council (the PC), an approved body for the purposes of Section 61G of the Town and Country Planning Act and therefore the appropriate body to represent the neighbourhood area, applied to SCDC who agreed under Regulations 6 and 7 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 that the PC could prepare the Plan for the parish of Great Bealings (See map at Appendix 1. Note that in drafting the Plan it is assumed that the parish and the village are one and the same). Great Bealings consulted with Playford and Little Bealings but those parishes decided not to participate in the Plan. Little Bealings, designated as a Local Service Centre, is not intending to write a Plan whereas Playford, an ‘Other Village’ like Great Bealings, is intending to write its own Plan. Great Bealings therefore proceeded on the basis that its Plan would be confined to its own parish boundary.
- 1.3. Before the Plan can be ‘made’, SCDC must confirm that it is in conformity with existing national and local policies and that it meets the requirements of paragraph 8 of Schedule 4b of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act. It must then get the support of a majority (50% plus 1 ‘yes’ vote) of residents (aged 18 or over) who will be asked to vote on it in a referendum, such referendum to be arranged by SCDC. The formal process of creating a Neighbourhood Plan is laid down in the NPPF and a full extract of the relevant guidance is attached at Appendix 9.
- 1.4. Great Bealings is a small rural village set in the valley of the River Lark some 7.5 miles east of Ipswich and 2.5 miles west of Woodbridge. Data from the 2011 UK census indicates a population of 310 in 120 households, with 222 names on the electoral roll. It is considered by SCDC to be an ‘Other Village’ as set out in policy SP28 of their Local Plan, that is to say it has no services (shop, pub, etc.) and is deemed to be part of the countryside. Over the last 25 years the population of the village has changed. Historically it had its roots in farming, but there are no residents left who work on the land in the traditional sense. While the proportion of older people is higher than for SCDC as a whole - 75% compared to 60% - there are now many more families with young children. As one might expect for a rural community, there are a number of retired people – 36% of the population compared to 16% for SCDC as a whole. There are also many who work in Woodbridge, Ipswich, or London. Of particular relevance is the fact that, reflecting modern trends, there are several

self-employed people who either work from home or run their business from home – 22% compared to 8% for the SCDC area. Communications are therefore important, as is broadband connectivity. There are a number of residents who run consulting businesses from their home, three bed and breakfast premises, several houses with studios, and a riding school and livery stables. There is an active group – Friends of Great Bealings Church – that organises social events for fundraising purposes, and a wildlife group has also been set up recently. This is not a dying community. Many people have chosen to live here for the very reasons set out in this Plan.

- 1.5. Although Great Bealings has no local services within the parish, it has access to the school in Little Bealings, shares the use of the Village Hall and the John Belstead Playing Field, and holds certain functions during the year together with Little Bealings. Both parishes are part of the Benefice of Great Bealings, Little Bealings, Playford, and Culpho and many of the services in the four churches rotate through the benefice. A new rector has recently been appointed and for the first time for many years she is resident in the Benefice. Although there are therefore a number of links with the neighbouring parishes, each community is distinct and has its own characteristics. Each village has its own Parish Council and Parochial Church Council and guards its independence with some pride.
- 1.6. One might ask why such a Plan is necessary. SCDC's Local Plan sets out how rural villages and the countryside should be protected (see Section 3 below) and indeed much of Great Bealings is already designated as a Special Landscape Area (SLA). That is only part of the story. Whilst the Plan must be in conformity with SCDC strategic and development management policies, it is also based on the views, wishes, and concerns of those who live here. It is their Plan. The PC will in effect enter into a compact with the residents to implement and enforce the policies in the Plan in accordance with the views of those who live here. It is proposed that the PC will write an Annual Monitoring Report for discussion at the Annual Parish Meeting so that all residents have the chance to see how the Plan is being followed up and used. This offers the chance to reinvigorate the relationship between the residents and the PC for the better, ensuring that the objectives of the Plan create a basis for the future of the village. The Plan therefore contains several aspirational elements by setting out and encouraging an approach to development generally that respects the landscape setting as well as the built character of the village. The fact is that however diligent SCDC are in pursuit of their own policies under their Local Plan, we cannot expect them or their officers to have the same sense of responsibility for what happens in our own village as those who live here. That is the point of Localism.
- 1.7. We do not know what threats might arise over time. Great Bealings is an oasis of calm surrounded by ever increasing development. Local plans will be reviewed every 5 years and the Government will inevitably be looking for more housing. There is already pressure to re-open the debate on the Ipswich Northern Bypass. By writing a Plan for Great Bealings now we can create a basis which can be used to argue our position in future and influence situations that might arise for the benefit of the village. More than that, the process of writing the plan has taught us a great deal about what is already here. From that knowledge,

and from what we know is important to those who live here now, we can build a Plan for the future.

- 1.8. In accordance with Regulation 38(B)1 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 this Plan is intended to have life of 10 years at which point it should be reviewed as appropriate both in terms of any wider developments in Government policy, any revised Local Plan issued by SCDC, and on the evidence of the success of the Plan over its initial life in achieving the objectives set out in Section 3 below. The Plan would have to be revised earlier if relevant changes in legislation so required.
- 1.9. The Plan has been drawn up in accordance with the Basic Conditions set out in the Localism Act 2011. These conditions require the Plan to:
  - have regard to national policies and advice issued by the Secretary of State;
  - contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
  - be in conformity with SCDC's Local Plan; and
  - be compatible with relevant EU regulations.

Given the limited scope of this Plan in the context of the 'Other Village' status of Great Bealings, these matters will be most relevant in the context of SCDC's Local Plan. Their advice has been sought throughout the process and their support has been extremely valuable.

- 1.10. The Plan will be subject to an independent examination to ensure compliance with the following documents:
  - NPPF (2012)
  - PPG (2014)
  - TCPA (1990)
  - Localism Act (2011) – including the Basic Conditions referred to above
  - Neighbourhood Plan Regulations (2012)
  - SCDC Local Plan (Adopted 2013)
  - SCDC Saved Policies (Saved 2013)
- 1.11. Much of the evidence upon which the Plan is based has been derived from a study commissioned by the PC and carried out by Suffolk Wildlife Trust (SWT), which is annexed to the Plan at Appendix 5. This identified and provided evidence of the topography, habitats, trees and hedgerows in the parish. The survey demonstrates the significant attributes of the Plan area and provides evidence to support the core objective of protecting the landscape, as well as laying a basis for its enhancement. Further support has been demonstrated by Suffolk's Nature Strategy, published in 2014 by Suffolk County Council (SCC)<sup>[3]</sup>, which identifies the importance of the county's river valleys, and which clearly sets out how the landscape and environmental features of the area contribute to general wellbeing. The setting of Great Bealings can thus be seen as a common good, deserving of recognition and protection.

1.12. As pointed out by SWT, SCC's strategy has strong relevance and linkages to the Neighbourhood Plan process. Within the 'Our Health and Wellbeing' section, it makes direct reference to Neighbourhood and Parish Plans, stating that:

- 'Once adopted, these plans become part of the Local Development Plan and as such become part of the statutory planning framework. These new powers provide a significant opportunity for communities to recognise, protect and improve local environmental assets.
- There is great scope for benefiting the environment, by designating green spaces to establish 'green corridors', by linking open spaces and improving local watercourses. We will support communities' writing and implementing their plans and help describe the wider context as we seek to build ecological networks across Suffolk.'

This Plan seeks to support this approach both through its policies and through engagement with local landowners so as to achieve the above objectives. We would hope that landowners will also benefit, for example in the context of entering into agri-environmental schemes for which this Plan could provide evidence and support.

1.13. Given its position so close to the proposed expansion of North Ipswich and the growth of Martlesham, Kesgrave, and Woodbridge, Great Bealings will inevitably be subject to increasing pressure from traffic and the search for rural development opportunities.



*Traffic in Boot Street*

1.14. However, the gentle landscape that we enjoy along the river valley, where if you are lucky kingfishers, otters, heron, and water voles can still be seen, therefore needs to be recognised and protected. This Plan, in accordance with the views expressed so strongly through the Questionnaire and at the various public meetings held over the last two years, is designed to set out how that protection can be achieved.



*The Lark Valley from Hasketon Road*

## 2. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

- 2.1. As with many villages, Great Bealings as we see it today is the product of its past. It is mentioned in Domesday Book, which cites the meadows and mills in the village of Belinges Magna (the name was changed to Bealings Magna in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and to Great Bealings in the 19<sup>th</sup> century). Its roots run deep through the fabric of Suffolk and indeed through the history of England.
- 2.2. It was established on a river with access to the sea and the gravel banks in the area are full of the signs of our ancient predecessors. The sequential development of the land by Ancient Britons, Romans, Saxons, and Danes, have all left their traces. There have been Bronze Age and Iron Age finds in the area, as well as Roman coins, Saxon swords, and other artefacts. Of particular note is the fact that Suffolk has yielded some of the greatest evidence of Neolithic implements anywhere in England, especially in the form of scrapers, which would have been used to hollow out the log canoes that were used to paddle up the rivers. Indeed the River Lark, a tributary of the River Deben, was navigable throughout this period. It was not until Victorian times that it became the small river we see today. It is widely thought that the name of the former Boot Inn (in Boot Street) is a contamination of the Suffolk pronunciation of “boat”. Stories are recorded of smugglers carrying their booty up the river and using the Rector’s horse and cart to distribute it to their clients, always leaving, of course, a gift by way of thanks to the Rector for his own enjoyment.
- 2.3. Suffolk has always been an area of prosperity built around trade and agriculture. The once prosperous ports of Dunwich and Orford thrived before becoming eroded or silted up, and before the discovery of the Americas led to a decline in North European trade. The remarkable discoveries at Sutton Hoo, with its close access to the River Deben, show how rich and powerful the settlements built around the rivers could become. Suffolk and Norfolk were among the most developed areas of the country and had a much larger proportion of ‘free peasantry’, one reason why they attracted distinct treatment in the Domesday Book and were separately catalogued in the ‘Little’ Domesday Book, which is more detailed than its ‘greater’ cousin. Suffolk gets 114 pages in the translated version, more than any other county in England except Norfolk. Bealings appears under the entry for Carlford Hundred, largely held by Robert Malet. A ‘sokeman’ by the name of Wulfnoth is listed as holding 14 acres, one plough, and half an acre of meadow. In a separate entry for the same Hundred, but under land held by Hervey de Bourges, ten free men are shown (one of which is called Stannard – a family that lived in the village until very recently), as well as Anund the Priest, whose name appears on the plaque in St Mary’s Church as the first rector of the parish in 1086. This entry lists 100 acres ‘in demesne’ to the manor of Wulmaer, including two ploughs belonging to the men, three acres of meadow, four horses, four head of cattle, and 16 pigs.
- 2.4. Suffolk’s prosperity was built on these agricultural foundations. The next stage in the story brings in Great Bealings’ most famous residents, the Seckfords. They had been established in the area in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, and it is believed that they took their name from the ‘sedge ford’ across the River Fynn at Martlesham. Confusingly there were three Seckfords called Thomas: the first was buried in St Mary’s, Great Bealings in 1505. The second, called

Thomas the Settler, presumably because he sold lands elsewhere to settle on his estates at Woodbridge and Bealings, built Seckford Hall, and died in 1575 having had seven sons and two daughters. He and his wife are also buried at St Mary's. One of his sons – Thomas the Benefactor – went on to achieve high office, second only to Lord Burghley, in the court of Queen Elizabeth the First. It was this Thomas who built the porch at St Mary's in memory of his parents and placed the Seckford Memorial in the church where it still stands. The Seckford crest was a Talbot, a broad mouthed, large-eared, hound (now extinct), a carving of which can be seen on some of the pew ends in the church.



*St Mary's Church*

- 2.5. Seckford the Benefactor was a lawyer, administrator, cartographer, MP for Ipswich, and loyal servant to the Queen. He had no children and as was typical of the age, he prepared to meet his maker by endowing almshouses in Woodbridge and making bequests to the church of St James in Clerkenwell where he also had property close to the former hospital of St John of Jerusalem. His brother, Henry, also lived there in a grace and favour apartment by virtue of his post as Master of the Queen's Tents and Pavilions. Thomas held the post of Master of the Court of Requests for 27 years, travelling round the country with the Queen. This proximity to the centralised power base of the Tudor throne allowed him access to great wealth and great opportunity. When in 1564 the lands of Woodbridge Priory were sold off, Thomas bought them. His mother was a Wingfield, and her family had been the tenants of the estate following the dissolution but the crown now needed the money from the sale. The estates of the dissolved Priory covered land in Martlesham, Great

Bealings, Hasketon, and Grundisburgh, all within the Liberty of St Etheldreda, a remnant of the land held by the monastery of Ely. The liberty (a phrase most popularly recalled in relation to the Liberties of the Savoy in London) was a distinct legal entity (very similar in boundary to SCDC's area today), responsible for its own courts and the collection of fines. When Seckford became the Steward of the Liberty he moved the court from Melton to Woodbridge and built the Sessions House (now the Shire Hall) in which courts were held until 1986. Thomas Seckford thus made his mark on Great Bealings in a way that shapes the village we see today. Seckford Hall itself, the finest Elizabethan building in the parish, is now a prestigious hotel and its splendid Tudor profile and architecture remind us of those past glories.



*Seckford Hall Hotel*

- 2.6. The church of St Mary's was begun in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Standing on a pronounced rise to keep it safe from flooding and overlooking meadows tucked into a bend in the river, the site is believed to have been a long barrow and a place of worship well before the current church was built. The manor of Bealings Hall was built next to the church, as was often the case, and the settlements where most of the inhabitants of the village lived were outside the demesne of the Hall and some way removed, grouped around the two ancient river crossings. The Hall fell into disrepair and was finally demolished in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. A sturdy red brick wall still stands at the boundary with the church, reminding us of the Hall that once stood there. Masonry remains from the Hall were used in the construction of Great Bealings House (see Moor, below). Since then the church has stood alone, both dividing and linking the two parts of the village.

- 2.7. Within the church there are memorials to Thomas (The Settler) and Elizabeth Seckford, as well as to the son of another great Elizabethan, John Clench. Both Clench senior and Clench junior were judges. The memorial is particularly fine, including representations of their children, both surviving and deceased, and unusually has their hands in prayer protruding from the main entablature of the memorial itself. A plaque records the names of the rectors from Anund the Priest to the present day, and shows how the ravages of the Black Death caused many changes of incumbent in a very few years. One of the rectors who had a particularly important role in the history of the village was Edward Moor.
- 2.8. Edward Moor was the son of another Edward, who had fought in the Mahratta army in Southern India in the campaign against Tippoo Sultan, Georgian England's favourite tyrant. Moor senior returned from India in 1805 as a result of his health, having served with distinction as Commissar General for the English army in Bombay for 6 years, and settled at Great Bealings House. He married Elizabeth Lynn, the daughter of John Lynn, a surgeon from Woodbridge who specialised in gynaecology and urinary infection. Lynn's other daughter, Emma, married Sir Augustus Frazer, who served alongside Wellington in the Peninsular War as commander of the Royal Artillery, and subsequently at Waterloo. Moor himself became a noted writer on Hindu mythology, and was made a member of the Royal Society in 1806 and a member of the Society of Antiquaries in 1818. It is believed that in the year he returned to Great Bealings, he planted the cedar trees that still stand in the park, as well the one that blew down in 1975 in the churchyard at St Mary's. His friend, Phillip Meadows, who was the rector at St Mary's at the time and living at The Lodge, also planted cedars, one of which still stands today. Moor's daughter, Charlotte, married William Wood, who became Lord Chancellor under Gladstone, and was ennobled as Baron Hatherley. The reredos in the church commemorates him. Both he and Charlotte are buried in St Mary's churchyard.
- 2.9. Edward Moor's son of the same name became the rector in 1844 and remained as incumbent for over 40 years. The Rectory was built by him in a prominent position with a commanding view of the church itself and the surrounding meadows. While he was rector he carried out substantial work on the church and gave it the appearance we see today. He had to rebuild one of the walls, repair the roof, and attend to the pews, many of which were in a sad state of decay. In this context he appointed Henry Ringham of Ipswich, one of the country's most respected woodcarvers, to restore the pew ends. Ringham was so admired that he was put on the shortlist to carry out much of the carving work in Pugin's new Houses of Parliament, a commission which in the end he did not carry out. Moor also wrote a diary, in several volumes with pictorial illustrations, that still stands as one of the definitive descriptions of the life of a Victorian country parson. In more recent times The Rectory was the home of the late Lord Belstead, Lord Lieutenant of the County and sometime Minister of State for Northern Ireland and Leader of the House of Lords under Margaret Thatcher.
- 2.10. Great Bealings today no longer has a pub, a post office, or a shop (the nearest ones are now in Grundisburgh, a couple of miles away) and the figures of the past may only be glimpsed

in the buildings and the memorials they have left behind. In some cases, such as Margaret Catchpole, there is no tangible legacy, only the fact that she is believed to have worked on Nathaniel Southgate's farm for a couple of years before going into service with the Cobbolds in Ipswich. The buildings that remain however are strong reminders of the stories of those who have lived here over the years, as described in the preceding paragraphs.

- 2.11. Many of the houses are built along the stratum line between the higher sandy soils and the lower clay base, so as to take advantage of the springs that rise there. Originally these houses would have used this supply of water to feed their wells, and some houses still do. Great Bealings has no village green or visible 'centre' in the accepted sense. Its charm and appeal however lie in the low key character of what there is, interspersed with some fine listed buildings, but also relying on a more subtle interplay of landscape and the built environment. It is exactly because the character of the village is so hard to define that the PC is seeking to protect it through the Plan. Small changes can have a significant effect on the character of the area, and the Plan sets out to propose ways in which those changes can be managed to retain both a living community and the charms of a traditional Suffolk village.

### 3. STRATEGY AND APPROACH

- 3.1 The Plan's primary objective is to create an approach to the management of future development based on the views of the people who live in the village and which is consistent with relevant government policies and guidance. In that sense it is a Plan directed at land use, as required by the NPPF. In writing the Plan, it has become apparent that the 'default' position of seeking to manage and steer development through the process of determining planning applications solely in relation to the built environment is not sufficient in the case of Great Bealings. Under section SP28 of SCDC's Local Plan the village is designated as an 'Other Village' such that there is no requirement to allow for increased residential development. Great Bealings is thus considered as part of the countryside and the infrastructure and services that would be required to support sustainable development do not exist.
- 3.2 The landscape setting of the village and its rural character are the defining features that residents enjoy and appreciate. Of particular relevance is the way the countryside penetrates the heart of the village, creating the gaps and spaces that define it. Buildings and how they are used will change over time, and indeed that process itself is part of the creation of character. It is the gaps and spaces between the buildings that do so much to define the setting and which led us to our strapline: '*A Village in a Landscape*'. The Plan expands on this approach by providing extensive evidence of the diversity and importance of the landscape setting in which the village is situated and defining where this intimate relationship of buildings and the natural environment is especially apparent and why it is so clearly appreciated by those who live here. The policies in the Plan are thus based on this approach.
- 3.3 The PC established a Working Group (the NPWG), chaired by the Chairman of the PC, which adopted the following approach:
- Survey opinion;
  - Catalogue and understand what is here already so as to establish the evidence base;
  - Analyse how the evidence, the consultation process, and SCDC's Local Plan between them create the basis for the Neighbourhood Plan's strategy, approach, and content;
  - Draw up policies accordingly.
- 3.4 Two open days were held in June 2013 to illustrate the benefits of such a Plan, to consider the proposed objectives, and to seek guidance on the views of residents and those businesses active in the village. Over 40 people attended these open days. Topics covered views, landscape issues, traffic, SCDC policies, listed buildings and potential Non Designated Heritage Assets (NDHAs), affordable housing (a display by Community Action Suffolk) and other matters. The responses were very helpful in guiding the NPWG towards a first draft of the Plan. Comments made during the open days also clarified what needed to be covered by the Questionnaire, which the NPWG was then able to draft. This was circulated in June 2014 (Appendix 9a) and very nearly two thirds of residents responded: a remarkably high level of engagement. A further public meeting in November 2014 was then held to publicise the results of the Questionnaire and to set out the way forward. Some

30 people attended this second public meeting. From that point, the NPWG had the basis on which detailed drafting of the Plan and its supporting policies could begin.

3.5 The responses to the Questionnaire (Appendix 8b) made it clear that the proposed approach had wide support:

- 94% agreed with the stated aims of the Plan.
- 97% supported the existing SLA designation of much of the village.
- 97% agreed that natural assets should be considered in the context of any new planning application.
- 95% agreed that any proposals for Affordable Housing should be subject to the same assessment as any other development and should be subject to specific local consultation. (However it should be noted that 56% of respondents when asked if they agreed that Affordable Housing should be provided in the village did not support such provision.)
- 98% agreed that no new development should take place in flood risk areas.
- 92% would like to see protection for wildlife habitats.
- 86% would like to see a conservation plan designed to protect the landscape.
- 72% wanted more protection for non-designated heritage assets.
- Percentages are based on replies received – 120 copies distributed; 79 copies returned; 66% response rate.

3.6 These responses show that there is considerable support for the core objectives of the Plan as follows:

- *To ensure that the landscape and other natural assets are considered in every planning application and that wildlife habitats are given appropriate protection.*
- *To create a conservation plan designed to protect the landscape.*
- *Any new buildings or changes to existing buildings should respect the character and quality of the village and its setting in the landscape and enhance the surrounding area.*
- *Affordable housing should be subject to the same criteria as other development and should be subject to local consultation.*
- *No new development should take place in flood risk areas both as to avoid any impairment to the flow or run-off of flood water and to avoid intrusion on the landscape value of the river valley.*
- *The value of Non Designated Heritage assets should be recognised and such properties given additional protection.*

These objectives reflect the responses to the Questionnaire and further opinions expressed by people in the community by way of feedback at public meetings. The policies which have been drawn up in sections 4 and 5 below are constructed so as to give effect to these objectives.



*Examples of the landscape between Boot Street and Lower Street*

3.7 There are several fundamental strategic policies (SPs) and development management policies (DMs) in SCDC’s Development Plan Document adopted in July 2013<sup>[2]</sup> which are of significance for Great Bealings and underpin the policies within the Plan.

- SP19 sets out the Settlement Hierarchy for the district and makes clear that in the case of Great Bealings the expected level of housing growth will be minimal. This is because Great Bealings has been classified as an ‘Other Village’ under SP28 and has therefore not been given a unit allocation under the wider requirement to meet government housing targets for the region.
- In addition, the effect of SP29 is that the village is regarded as being part of the Countryside, where development is severely limited.
- DM3 states that new housing would only be allowed where it comprises:
  - Replacement dwellings on a one to one basis where the replacement is no more visually intrusive than the building to be replaced;
  - Sub-division of a larger dwelling to meet a local need;
  - Affordable Housing as an exception under the terms of DM1;
  - Conversion subject to certain controls (DM13); or
  - Minor infilling (DM4): but note that any such proposal would also come under SP15 in relation to the preservation of gaps, spaces, and the avoidance of coalescence.
- SP14 provides for biodiversity and geodiversity to be protected in the countryside and enhanced through a number of measures.
- SP15 aims to protect and enhance the various landscape character areas including the river valley, which is the underlying rationale for the current Special Landscape Area (SLA) status of the valley and tributaries of the River Fynn (which include the River Lark that runs through the village). SP15 also enables the Plan to designate and protect gaps and spaces which make an important contribution to the village in their undeveloped form. In essence, the combined effect of these strategic policies is that unless there are exceptional circumstances, new housing is limited to the conditions set out in DM3.
- DM6 states that the creation of self-contained annexes may be permitted if they provide, for example, capacity for the care of an elderly relative or the capacity for short term letting as bed and breakfast accommodation or holiday accommodation,

subject to meeting the other design, scope, visual impact, and environmental considerations set out elsewhere in the Plan.

- DM21 sets out an approach to design aesthetics that this Plan supports, specifically in relation to scale, setting, the preservation of gaps and spaces, and the importance of protecting landscape, ecology, heritage, amenity, and related considerations.
- DM27 stresses the importance of protecting biodiversity and geodiversity, important objectives in the context of this Plan's approach to the natural environment and the setting of the village.
- DM28 addresses flood risk, which is relevant to Great Bealings in the context of the flood risk posed by the River Lark.

3.8 The relationship between the landscape and the buildings that sit within it forms the core of the Plan. The outstanding landscape quality of the river valley has been recognised by its designation as an SLA. The river and its floodplain form the thread that links the different areas of the village and gives it its distinctive character. Along this valley the Plan proposes a designated series of interlocking **Landscape Protection Areas** (LPAs, a phrase used specifically for the purposes of this Plan) that contain and frame the village. They have been selected because they best illustrate the fundamental relationship between the landscape setting and the built environment that is at the heart of the Plan. However they also provide detailed evidence in support of the existing SLA designation, interpreting it at the local level.

3.9 The strapline '*A Village in a Landscape*' is no accident. The LPAs all contribute to the overriding effect of a village that sits comfortably within its landscape context. This relationship can be seen through and across its contours from either the road network, the footpaths that run through the village, or the views that people have from their houses. The latter was a point made consistently in the responses to the Questionnaire.

3.10 The five LPAs are each described in more detail in Section 4. The objective is to ensure that no new development should take place within an LPA, or which would have a detrimental effect on an LPA, in order to ensure that the village's distinctive visual appeal is preserved. Such matters as trees, hedges, and habitats would need to be considered in this context, as well as the application of policies to ensure that any building that is visible in or from an LPA should not be enlarged or otherwise developed so as to prejudice view lines, scale, materials, or roof heights.

3.11 The Plan also considers the built environment of the village. The buildings listed by English Heritage echo its development and history and create a strong sense of form and structure. However given the disparate nature of the village and its lack of a conventional central point such as a green, the Plan seeks to capture its character through the identification of **Non Designated Heritage Assets** (NDHAs) – a denomination that is now accepted in policy terms by the NPPF and for which SCDC has published comprehensive guidelines which the PC has adopted for the purposes of this Plan. These houses, structures, or architectural features will be identified and validated not only so as to protect them individually but also so as to underwrite guidance in relation to designs and materials that

would be appropriate in the context of future developments within the village as a whole. While permitted development (either agricultural or domestic) would not be affected, there will be a presumption in favour of retaining and repairing NDHAs.

- 3.12 It is important to state that the purpose of the Plan is not to prevent the natural evolution of the way people live in their homes or remove their permitted development rights. Change is what creates interest, variety, and appeal. However, in accordance with the NPPF paragraph 60, the Plan seeks to promote and reinforce local distinctiveness. Well-designed additions to or enhancements of existing buildings add to the character and setting of the village rather than detracting from it. The Plan can influence what people do and draw attention to the importance of such issues in the context of any proposed development.
- 3.13 This dual approach built around the landscape setting of the village and its built environment forms the basis of the Plan. The SWT report, and other supporting evidence, are all set out in the Appendices.

## 4. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

### Introduction

- 4.1 Within the Plan, the Natural Environment is considered in the context of its two key elements: the character of its landscape and its wildlife assets. These are, however, clearly interdependent. The SWT report noted (at page 34) that as a result of the nature of the landscape, '*Great Bealings has a high quality ecological network*' compared to many other Suffolk parishes.

### Landscape Character

- 4.2 The majority of the landscape of Great Bealings is contained within the Lark river valley. In 1987 SCC and SCDC designated the valley of the River Fynn and its tributaries, which includes the River Lark, as a Special Landscape Area (SLA). This is a countywide designation, which primarily highlights the special landscape qualities of the river valleys. One of the objectives of the Plan is to underscore the value and importance of the SLA and show how through local application it can be given added weight and support within the parish.
- 4.3 **The Fynn Valley SLA** covers approximately 80% of the village. Within the parish only one area in the west, two in the north and a small section in the southeast are not covered by this designation. These areas comprise farmland which is arguably less vulnerable to change than the rolling river valley landscape which is included within the SLA.
- 4.4 In 2008, SCC carried out a countywide Landscape Character Assessment,<sup>[4]</sup> which was a more in depth study to describe and assess the particular character and qualities of landscape areas of the county. The assessments of 'landscape character' have more precise prescriptions and guidelines than those relating to SLAs. They therefore complement but significantly extend the concepts reflected in the Fynn Valley SLA. This more detailed assessment confirmed the special landscape qualities of the parish and is reflected in the SWT report.
- 4.5 The SLA is a saved policy and the status of the SLA designation is under review. According to the SCDC Local Plan (para 3.156) '*Any decision that may be taken in the longer term to either delete or amend the SLA designation, would be based on the findings of the Landscape Character Assessment and the success in implementing any guidelines generated by it. The success or otherwise of this approach may be monitored. In the meantime, the SLA boundaries will continue to apply and these will be set out in the relevant site allocations and area specific policies documents.*' SCDC have confirmed that the LPAs sit neatly under the SLA designation, supporting that policy and adding local detail and validity to the overall landscape assessment of the region. This is exactly what a Neighbourhood Plan is designed to do.
- 4.6 The Plan considers the significance of both the SLA and Landscape Character Assessment. It also relies heavily on SCC's Development and Land Management Guidance for each landscape character<sup>[4]</sup>. In so doing the Plan supports the review process and demonstrates

how the SLA and landscape character assessments are both vitally important in achieving the objectives of the Plan.

- 4.7 SCC identified and described two types of landscape character areas within Great Bealings: **Ancient Rolling Farmlands** ('Arable Landscape'), the traditional arable landscape which occurs largely to the north and east, stretching from Hasketon Road to Seckford Hall, and **Rolling Valley Farmlands and Furze** (gorse) ('Valley Landscape'), situated primarily to the west and south of the Parish. (See map at p 10 of the SWT Report)
- 4.8 **The Arable Landscape** is characterised by rolling arable farmland dissected by the river valley, with sinuous field boundaries, substantial open areas, scattered ancient woodland parcels and hedges of hawthorn and elm with oak, ash and field maple as hedgerow trees.
- 4.9 **The Valley Landscape** is typical of valleys with prominent river terraces of sandy soil, co-axial field systems, multi-species hedgerows and fragmentary cover of woodland. There is a very close correlation between the boundaries of the Fynn Valley SLA and the Valley Landscape within the village. It is this landscape which contributes significantly to the special character of the village. The river forms a corridor through the village and the field margins and hedgerows that emanate from it, like the spokes of a wheel, add to the effect.
- 4.10 The following photograph taken from Holly Lane looking east, shows Valley Landscape in the foreground with trees and glimpses of the Arable Landscape in the distance.



*Holly Lane looking east*

#### **Impact of the Landscape on planning development in Great Bealings**

- 4.11 Great Bealings sits within an area of largely unspoiled landscape which, given its proximity to Ipswich and Woodbridge, sets it apart and creates the special character the Plan is

intended to protect and, where possible, enhance. While the day to day management of much of that landscape is in the hands of the farmers who own it, it is hoped that this Plan, as set out in paragraph 1.12 above, will provide a basis for a mutually beneficial approach as between the policies in the Plan and their objectives.

- 4.12 SCDC's overarching policy for the Countryside, SP29, provides a clear statement that development within the Countryside must be based on necessity and must accord with other relevant policies. SP14 is designed to ensure the protection of biodiversity and geodiversity using a framework based on a network of features which includes landscape character types.
- 4.13 The effect of SLAs being a 'saved policy' within the SCDC's Local Plan is that SCDC has committed to ensuring that no development takes place which would be to the *material detriment of or materially detract from the special landscape quality of the SLA*.<sup>[5]</sup> This is due largely to the fact that river valleys are considered to be the landscape element most vulnerable to development because they are the least changed of Suffolk's rural landscape types, being still managed largely under traditional farming practices.
- 4.14 Also relevant is the development management guidance issued by Suffolk County Council for each landscape character type (see below). The SCC guidance addresses the needs of development management and sets out the principles to be followed when dealing with particular types of development.
- 4.15 The approach adopted in the Plan is to incorporate best practice in accordance with the SCC guidance. For instance, it provides a basis on which a dialogue can be had with residents and local farmers to encourage and support an approach which meets the overall objectives of the Plan.

#### **SCC Development and Land Management Guidance relating to the Arable Landscape**

- 4.16 The SCC Development Guidance<sup>[4(b)]</sup> notes that in arable landscapes settlements tend to be '*scattered widely throughout this landscape, with parishes tending to have multiple built clusters of various sizes: large groups often elongated; outlying groups often based on green side settlement; and wayside settlements and farmsteads.*' The risk is that '*historic patterns within parishes are easily lost to infill and ribbon development.*' It also identifies '*expansion of garden curtilage, change of land to horse paddocks, and other recreational uses as akin to settlement expansion, eroding the characteristic form and vernacular styles*'. The guidance advises that new or expanded garden curtilage should always be designed to fit into the local context and respect the existing local pattern. '*Any new buildings should be close to and subordinate in size to existing buildings. Any new agricultural buildings should be designed to integrate the development into the character of the landscape. Change of use to horse paddocks should include strategies to mitigate any adverse impact on grassland in more ecologically sensitive areas and should be in keeping with the local field pattern or the historic pattern of boundaries.*'

4.17 SCC's Land Management Guidance <sup>[4(b)]</sup> refers to reinforcing the historic pattern of boundaries where they exist, coppice management of hedgerows, maintaining and increasing hedgerow trees, and maintaining the extent of and improving the condition of woodland cover with effective management

### **SCC Development and Land Management Guidance relating to the Valley Landscape**

4.18 In view of the close correlation between the Valley Landscape and the Fynn Valley SLA, the guidance from SCC relating to this landscape is of particular significance to the parish.

4.19 SCC Development Guidance <sup>[4(d)]</sup> refers to '*expansion of settlements, expansion of garden curtilage and change of land use, especially the creation of horse paddocks*' as being among the key forces for change within this landscape. The Guidance makes the (perhaps obvious) point that '*in these valley side landscapes, the visual impact of new vertical elements is increased by the landform. Therefore new buildings are likely to have a significant impact on both the character and visual amenity of the valley floor and valley side landscape types.*' In order to protect this landscape, the Guidance advises that it is important to maintain the existing pattern of settlement clusters and to be aware that '*settlement expansion in a valley is likely to have a significant visual impact and adversely affect the character of the landscape, including that of the adjoining valley floor. A comprehensive Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment is essential to identify the risks and options for mitigation. These developments tend to create highly visible new 'roofscapes' on the sides of valleys*'. Another salient point is that new structures should be located to make the best use of existing hedges and trees both to screen the development and as a backdrop. Existing hedge lines should also be reinforced to improve the mitigation they provide.

4.20 The importance of maintaining and increasing the stock of hedgerow trees and woodland cover applies equally in the Valley Landscape as in the Arable Landscape. Further, any new woodland should respect the historic landscape characteristics.

### **Wildlife and Nature Conservation**

4.21 The parish contains a number of areas and habitats which have been designated or identified as of local importance for wildlife. These are discussed in more detail in the next paragraphs.

### **County Wildlife Sites**

4.22 County Wildlife Sites (CWS) are areas which the Suffolk County Wildlife Site Panel has identified as being of county or regional importance because of their habitat characteristics and the potential for wildlife. There are three in the parish: Kiln Farm Meadow, Queech Wood and Meadow Cottage Wood. All three are in private ownership. CWS status does not however confer any right of access either to the general public or to conservation organisations, and there is no statutory requirement to manage them so as to preserve their value. Should such protection be considered in the future, this Plan would provide supporting evidence of the importance of a CWS in its surrounding environment.

- **Kiln Farm Meadow** to the northeast of Lower Street is a small, 0.75 hectare species-diverse wet fen meadow. This habitat is relatively rare in Suffolk.
- **Queech Wood** is a 3 hectare ancient wood surrounded by a ditch and bank and is listed in Natural England's Ancient Woodland Inventory.
- **Meadow Cottage Wood** is a 2.15 hectare wet woodland, notable for some scarce plant species associated with this habitat.

### Priority Habitats

4.23 It is government policy, as set out in 'Biodiversity 2020 – a strategy for England's Wildlife and Ecosystem Services', to seek an overall improvement in the status of the country's wildlife. SCC's Nature Strategy, which is in line with Biodiversity 2020, is designed to ensure that habitats and species of conservation interest are recognised and protected. Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership (SBP) identifies and publishes statutory lists of Priority Habitats and Species occurring in Suffolk. The SBP is also responsible for producing the Suffolk Local Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), which identifies ecological assets which are of value to their local areas. [3]

4.24 SBP have identified 24 Priority habitats across Suffolk, of which the following eleven are found in Great Bealings:

- **Rivers and streams.** The Rivers Lark and Fynn flow through the parish.
- **Lowland heath including acid grassland** as found in Bealings Lane and near Cherry Tree Farm.
- **Floodplain grazing marsh** adjacent to the River Lark and at the confluence of the Lark and Fynn.
- **Ancient species rich hedgerows**, found in 65% of the extensive network of hedgerows within the parish.
- **Lowland mixed deciduous woodland**, most notable of which is Queech Wood CWS. There are ten other non-designated areas throughout the parish.
- **Wet woodland** which is to be found at Meadow Cottage Wood CWS and three other areas within the Fynn Valley SLA. It is also notable that, for virtually all of its course through the parish, the River Lark is fringed by a ribbon of relatively closely spaced trees and shrubs, which has a very high wildlife value.
- **Lowland meadows**, often termed 'old meadows', which have a long history of traditional management including haymaking, and include unimproved pastures where livestock grazing is the main use. The Churchyard of St Mary's church supports a moderately rich meadow-type flora.
- **Fens.** Kiln Farm Meadow CWS is a prime example of a fen meadow.
- **Wood pasture and parkland** found to the west and south of Bealings House. The views of Bealings House taken from the South show the house and its surrounding parkland which contains a number of specimen veteran oak trees.
- **Arable field margins** between cropped areas and field boundaries which can provide valuable habitat where they are wide or contain wild flowers. There are several examples throughout the parish, such as along Seckford Hall Lane and Bealings Lane.

- **Ponds.** There are at least nine non-garden ponds within the parish but Great Bealings is an area of relatively low pond density.
- 4.25 Priority habitats are prime ‘core areas’ for biodiversity. They are also important in providing wildlife ‘corridors’ (especially hedgerows, arable margins and riparian features), ‘stepping stones’ (smaller areas of deciduous woodland and the ponds) and ‘restoration areas’ with the potential for enhancement into ‘core areas’.
- 4.26 Priority habitats which are adjacent to each other further enhance biodiversity. Notable are the linked habitats of Floodplain Grazing, Marsh and Wet Woodland along the River Lark. Other photos of Priority habitats can be seen in the SWT Report.
- 4.27 The NPPF (para 117) requires Local Plans (and by association their integrated adopted Neighbourhood Plans) to *‘promote the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species populations. It is essential for local decision makers to have access to high quality ecological advice in order to meet these requirements’*.
- 4.28 SCC’s Nature Strategy at page 16 highlights the importance of the Suffolk Biodiversity Action Plan and its associated Priority Species and Habitats, which are required to be *‘... embedded in local planning policies’*. It adds that *‘impacts on legally protected species are a material consideration in the planning process, whilst impacts on priority species and habitats are also capable of being material considerations.’* <sup>[2]</sup>
- 4.29 SCDC’s Policy DM27 and its associated guidance provides that *‘all development proposals should:*
- (a) *Protect the biodiversity and geodiversity value of land and buildings and minimise fragmentation of habitats;*
  - (b) *Maximise opportunities for restoration, enhancement and connection of natural habitats;*
  - (c) *Incorporate beneficial biodiversity conservation features where appropriate’.*
- 4.30 These requirements mean that development proposals which would have an adverse effect (whether alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on designated areas such as County Wildlife Sites or priority habitats and species will not be permitted. An exception to this may be made if it can be demonstrated that the benefits of the development outweigh both the impacts on the features of the site and any wider ecological network. In such circumstances, the standard mitigation hierarchy should be applied (first avoid, then mitigate, finally compensate). Any required mitigation/compensatory measures must be secured via the approval process and implemented for the life of the development project.

## Trees and Hedgerows

4.31 Trees and hedgerows are prominent features throughout the parish, having survived in the river valley setting in greater numbers than would have been the case in more intensively farmed areas. They include: several areas of mixed deciduous woodland; the wet woodland near the river (the Meadow Cottage Wood CWS); species rich hedgerows; groups and rows of trees; and many mature or veteran individual trees.



*Hedgerow trees in Hall Farm Road*



*Woodland near Rosery Lane*

4.32 The parish has retained an above-average number of veteran hedgerow trees, which are important both visually and for the wildlife habitat they provide. A comprehensive hedgerow survey was carried out a few years ago to demonstrate the age and variety of hedges in the area. A copy of this survey is held by SCDC. Hedges are not generally covered by planning policies or conditions and, as a general rule, hedgerows will thrive only if residents and landowners continue to plant and maintain them. However, the Plan creates a basis for ensuring that in the context of a planning application, the effect on hedges can be considered to protect against their removal and encourage replacement if necessary.

4.33 A few trees are currently protected by TPOs. As part of the policy to protect and enhance habitats for wildlife, the Plan proposes that work should be undertaken to assess whether any other individual trees or groups of trees, such as hedgerow oaks, are of such significant value to the parish that they should also be protected. When this review is completed it is intended to identify those trees or groups of trees which may need formal protection and to produce a supplementary policy note for formal adoption and incorporation within the Plan.

4.34 However the majority of trees, whilst not eligible for the protection afforded by TPOs because they are not currently deemed to be under threat, nevertheless play a vitally important role, both individually and collectively, in a number of ways:

- they make a highly visible contribution to the rich and varied landscape of the Lark Valley SLA;
- they provide important ecological habitats, supporting a wide range of wildlife;
- they provide a link between the built environment and countryside, helping to set the village in its landscape context;

- they help to reinforce the distinctive, rural character of the village;
- they provide privacy for those residents whose houses are hidden from the road behind hedges.



*Hedges and trees in Lower Street*

4.35 The crucial value of trees and hedgerows in the landscape has been a major factor in the selection of the LPAs; and their importance is recognised in Objective LP1.

#### **Landscape Protection Areas and Areas to be Protected from Development**

4.36 86% of the people who responded to the parish questionnaire said that they would like to see a conservation plan designed to protect the landscape. The Plan, relying on SCDC's SP15 makes this possible. SCDC has recognised (para 3.159) that *'the setting of settlements within their wider landscape context is an important function in defining and maintaining quality of place and identity. Further, across the District there are many instances where the space between settlements or smaller, more isolated groups of buildings makes an important contribution to the sense of place and where the introduction of new development could result in coalescence or the perception of coalescence (for example ribbon type development) and should be avoided'*.

4.37 SP15 sets out the commitment of the local authority to protect and enhance the various landscape character areas within the district. It also considers that the *'valleys and tributaries of the ... Fynn... are considered to be particularly significant'*. SP15 also makes provision for Neighbourhood Plans to include and protect *'sites, gaps, gardens and spaces that make an important contribution to a particular location in their undeveloped form ... or... where development in these locations would lead to coalescence'*.

4.38 The Plan has identified five LPAs within the village which are considered particularly important in supporting and validating the existing SLA and where development (even if it would otherwise be justified under SP28) would be tightly controlled because the Community considers that their value to the parish in their current, undeveloped state substantially outweighs the benefits of any development.

4.39 Furthermore, by way of logical extension to the concept of the LPAs, and in support of SCDC's replacement of 'saved' policy AP28, it is proposed that within certain of the LPAs there should be identified Areas to be Protected from Development (APDs). These will serve to support the overall objective of preventing any development which could lead to infilling and the resulting loss of the 'gaps and spaces' which would be detrimental to the character of the area. This proposal is wholly consistent with SP15.

#### **The evidence for the LPAs and APDs**

4.40 The decision to designate five areas within the village as LPAs has been taken on the basis of the following elements which are considered to be of particular importance to the village and should therefore be conserved:

- they are all within the Fynn Valley SLA and play an important role in demonstrating the special landscape character of the river valley;
- they contain key environmental features and important wildlife habitats, as evidenced in the SWT Report;
- some have a value in maintaining the current balance of gaps and spaces which reduce the risk or perception of risk of coalescence;
- they provide views from public roads and footpaths which residents have consistently said at public meetings are of particular value;
- some contain listed buildings.

4.41 Individually and collectively, they show the importance of the relationship between the village, the landscape, and the natural environment in which it sits, creating the overarching setting that the Plan seeks to protect and enhance by making development in these areas extremely difficult to justify. The five areas are clearly marked on the map in Appendix 1.

#### **[1] Area around Bealings House and Rosery Farm**

4.42 This is the most easterly of the LPAs, stretching from the historic parkland surrounding Bealings House in the north to the River Lark in the south. It includes the fields around Rosery Farm, which marks the western boundary of the LPA. It is bordered largely by woodland to the east.



*Bealings House*



*Rosery Farm*

- 4.43 The parkland surrounding Bealings House contains a number of large trees, notably oak, Scots pine and a number of cedars planted c. 1804. Of particular significance is what is left of an old oak avenue which runs down to the river and is abutted by mixed woodland on Bird's Hill, currently being regenerated. The area contains the most significant parkland priority habitat in the village and provides a wealth of cover for wildlife. Priority species the area is likely to support include brown long-eared bats and birds such as song thrush and starling. This area is not currently listed as historic parkland under SPG6 but should be considered when that policy is reviewed.
- 4.44 There are also views across the traditional farmland to the river valley. The group of farm buildings centred on Rosery Farm – a listed building - are a significant element in this landscape and form a composition which should be protected.
- 4.45 Other listed buildings in this area include Birds Hill, Bealings House, and The Rosery and, accordingly, are subject to specific protection.
- 4.46 The area could be enhanced by the planting of young oak trees to replenish the oak avenue. The current owner has indicated that he will seek to achieve this.

**[2] The approach to the village along Lodge Road**

- 4.47 This LPA lies to the east of Lower Street beyond a row of houses in Lodge Road. It is bordered on the east by the footpath to Meadow Cottage and stretches south from Lodge Road across the valley farmland to the River Lark. A small section lies to the north of the Road around Green Close.



*Views of the Valley Landscape to the south of Lodge Road*

- 4.48 To the south there are views across the farmland towards the river which provides habitat for Priority species such as otter and water vole. The arable land within the area also provides suitable habitat for species such as skylark.
- 4.49 From the east and south there are pleasing views of the houses framed by trees and hedges. To the north is an attractive farmed landscape with views towards Rosery Lane and the wood above Kiln Lane.



*Lodge Road, from the east*



*North section of LPA, from Rosery Lane*

4.50 These views frame the eastern approach to the village and because of their visual importance it is considered essential that they should be protected from development. They have been identified as spaces that should be retained in their undeveloped form and therefore it is proposed that both sides of Lodge Road in this area should be designated as an APD.

### **[3] Kiln Lane**

4.51 This is a very significant area as the landscape penetrates right into the heart of the village where Kiln Lane joins Lower Street, and provides a classic illustration of the extent to which the village and the landscape work in harmony. It includes the area of rolling farmland and woods to the east of Kiln Lane. It is bounded to the north by Rosery Lane and to the west by properties in Lower Street. The farmland provides habitat for Priority species such as skylark and yellowhammer. Grayling butterfly have also been recorded in this area.



*The harmony of village and landscape in Kiln Lane viewed from north and south*

4.52 Any new housing other than on existing plots is highly likely to detract from the views and change the special character of Kiln Lane itself and the area where it joins Lower Street. Furthermore, Kiln Lane is an unsurfaced restricted by-way and is not suitable for any increase in traffic.

4.53 For these reasons the land either side of Kiln Lane as far as Kiln Farm is to be protected from development by being designated as an APD.

**[4] St Mary's Church and surrounding meadowland**

4.54 The village does not have a village green and the Church, which is a listed building, is both the historic heart of the village and its fulcrum, linking the two residential areas of Boot Street and Lower Street. The church tower is a prominent feature which is visible from almost every direction as one approaches or goes through the village.

4.55 The area of meadowland around the church and the distinctive avenue of lime trees help to anchor the church in the landscape and enhance the views of the historic building. Some of the trees are old and some are in poor condition and therefore this is an area where some sensitive enhancement could be achieved.



*The church and meadowland*



*The avenue of lime trees*

4.56 This LPA covers the valley and meadows along the River Lark, from Hall Farm Road in the north to Lower Street in the east. The River marks and western and southern boundaries. The adjoining areas of floodplain grazing marsh, wet woodland and lowland meadows are all Priority habitats. These provide habitat for Priority species such as otter, water vole and barn owl.



*Water meadows and farmland west of Lower Street*

4.57 The small field to the south and west of Lower Street beyond the end of the current built up area is a flood meadow that serves to protect neighbouring properties from flooding. It is designated as an APD so as to prevent the encroachment of development into this sensitive area and protect the river margin and the views across to the church.

**[5] Boot Street**

4.58 The LPA stretches south from Boot Street across the valley farmland and floodplain as far as the parish boundary. To the north, it includes the area to the east of the footpath leading from Boot Street to Hill Farm Cottage. It is bordered in the east by the River Lark.

4.59 The primarily residential settlement of Boot Street contains a great variety of properties, with nearly all the gardens backing onto farmland or open countryside and the houses having good views over open countryside on both sides. The river valley creates a green corridor and provides a beautiful visual amenity for this part of Great Bealings.

4.60 To the north and north-east lies a very attractive farmed and rolling landscape with some dominant groups of trees; to the south is a more open landscape. Both areas have distant views down the valley towards the River Fynn. Furthermore, the River Lark, with its fringing trees and shrubs, forms a valued wildlife asset and is a Priority habitat, supporting species such as otter and water vole.



*The Lark Valley north of Boot Street*



*Towards Boot Street Bridge from the west*



*Boot Street approach from the west*



*Farmland to the south*

4.61 At the eastern end of Boot Street stands the hump-backed bridge – a scheduled monument - which has some visual appeal in its own right and provides a vantage point overlooking the river and its adjoining meadows. Between this bridge and the nearest houses are open gaps of about 100 metres on each side of the road. Both are within or adjacent to the flood plain and have poor sight lines along the highway. These factors, in addition to the visual amenity which these gaps provide, lead to the conclusion that any proposals for their

development should be strongly resisted and for this reason the area either side of Boot Street in the vicinity of the bridge should be designated as an APD.

4.62 Similarly at the western approach to Boot Street the open landscape to the south and the restricted width of the highway militates against any possibility of development and for this reason this area also should be designated as an APD.

#### 4.63 Objectives and Policies relating to the Landscape and Biodiversity

**Objective:**

*To ensure that the landscape and other natural assets are considered in every planning application and that wildlife habitats are given appropriate protection.*

**Policy LP1 – Landscape and Biodiversity**

*To be supported development proposals within settlement clusters or open countryside must demonstrate through appropriate landscape impact assessment and ecological evidence that they protect and enhance landscape quality, biodiversity, and geodiversity. Proposals must demonstrate that they make best use of existing hedgerows and trees to screen development, minimise the fragmentation of habitats, and do not adversely affect a County Wildlife Site or any Priority habitat or species.*

*Proposals must not have any detrimental impact on the Special Landscape Area defined on the Map at Appendix 1. Within the Special Landscape Area development proposals must demonstrate that the loss of any tree or hedgerow cannot be avoided and that in such circumstances equivalent compensatory planting is to be undertaken. Loss of valuable, distinctive, or specimen trees, or the deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, will only exceptionally be supported where it is demonstrated that the benefits of development clearly outweigh the loss.*

***Objective:***

***To create a conservation plan designed to protect the landscape.***

**Policy LP2 – Locally Important Landscape Areas**

*Five Landscape Protection Areas (LPA) have been designated and are defined on the Map at Appendix 1. In these LPAs residential development will be limited to one to one replacement of an existing dwelling where there is no loss of hedgerows or trees, or sub-division of an existing dwelling where there is a demonstrated need. To be supported proposals must demonstrate no harm to the landscape setting.*

*Areas to be protected from any development are designated in the areas defined on the Map at Appendix 1 in order to maintain important gaps and spaces and avoid coalescence of built areas.*

## 5. BUILT ENVIRONMENT

### Introduction

- 5.1 The special and outstanding qualities of the countryside within which Great Bealings is located have been clearly set out in the previous section but it is worth repeating that the river valley dominates the landscape linking the two principal settlement clusters around Boot Street and Lower Street. Sitting midway between the two is the dominant feature of St. Mary`s church.
- 5.2 The Lower Street area is in the valley and gives the appearance of being secluded. The housing is largely low density and detached, apart from the row of cottages at the junction of Lower Street and Kiln Lane. The houses are mostly inward looking though some have open views over distant landscape. There is a wide variety of house types, ages and sizes while the important presence of hedgerows (where these have not been removed by householders) gives an intimacy of scale. This wide variety is unified by the effect of planting. Trees are the dominating element forming important entrance gateways at the beginning of the built up part of this area particularly on Lodge Road. There are good examples of materials and colours in the more visible dwellings.



- 5.3 In comparison, the Boot Street area, which is situated at a slightly higher elevation, is more open in character, with strong linear form and a higher housing density compared to Lower Street. Although it is more visible than Lower Street, there are trees, brick walls or

hedgerows which screen many of the houses from the road. Sporadic development originally started with the oldest dwellings near the bridge over the River Lark. Infill development over a period of time has led to a variety of types and ages which add interest, character and visual history to this locality. Mature trees form important gateways into the built up area from the parish boundary at the western end of Boot Street and at the Grundisburgh Road entrance.



- 5.4 In both settlements the landscape is the dominant element and apart from a few landmarks such as the church tower the built form has developed within the landscape setting to create the symbiotic relationship between the two that characterises the village.
- 5.5 In both areas, the increased use of hedgerows and trees adjoining the road, especially where hedges have been removed, would enhance the rural nature of the village.

## **Objectives and Policies relating to the Built Environment**

### **New Housing**

- 5.6 The effect of the designation of Great Bealings as an “Other Village” (for which no physical boundaries have been defined) is that, subject to the exception relating to affordable housing (see para 5.14 below), new housing is restricted to the conditions set out in DM3 (see paragraph 3.7 above) and further referred to in SP28 and SP29 as well as paragraph 55 of the NPPF.

### **Design Aesthetics**

- 5.7 The SCDC Local Plan recognises that the district as a whole has a distinctive character even in non-designated areas. As noted in 5.2 and 5.3 above, each of the two principal areas of the village covered by the Plan has its own distinctive characteristics in relation to its setting and layout. Development proposals should where possible follow these characteristics, supported by the design approach recommended in the Plan. Such an approach would add supporting detail to the SCDC Local Plan in the context of DM21, 22, and 23.

- 5.8 Although any development proposal is likely to be restricted to single properties, it is recognised by the PC that poor design can have a significant adverse impact on the neighbouring area, whether the property is within a settlement cluster or is more isolated within the countryside. In such a sensitive overall setting issues such as mass, height, screening, and proximity to other buildings or natural features can have a disproportionate effect.
- 5.9 The Plan therefore focuses on the delivery of high quality outcomes by guiding the overall scale of a building, its height, landscaping, layout and materials to ensure that it connects appropriately to its locality.
- 5.10 The effect of SCDC Policy DM21 is that: *‘proposals that comprise poor visual design and layout or otherwise seriously detract from the character of their surroundings will not be permitted. Development will be expected to establish a strong sense of place, using street scenes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit. SCDC will support and strongly encourage the conservation of energy and the use of alternative and renewable sources of energy in the design and layout of proposals for new buildings and conversion of existing buildings, provided it would not seriously detract from the character of the area’.*
- 5.11 The Plan fully supports the objective, set out in SCDC Policy DM21 and paragraph 60 of the NPPF, of not trying to stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles but recognises the importance of ensuring that any new development promotes and reinforces local distinctiveness, reflecting the identity of local surroundings and materials. The Plan also expects all development to take every opportunity to improve the character and quality of the neighbourhood.

***Objective:***

***Any new buildings or changes to existing buildings should respect the character and quality of the village and its setting in the landscape and enhance the surrounding area.***

**Policy BE1 – Design of Development Proposals**

*All development proposals should demonstrate good quality design and respect and enhance the character and appearance of the surrounding area, including, where available and suitable, the re-use of land that has already been developed. In order to achieve this requirement, all development must:*

- *Use good quality materials that complement the existing palette of materials used within the area;*
- *Demonstrate how it respects and enhances the important qualities and character of the area;*
- *Be proportionate in scale (height, mass and siting etc.), both to the size of the plot and in relation to neighbouring properties.*

### **Sustainable Construction**

- 5.12 The Plan supports the approach set out in SCDC's Local Plan, specifically Policy DM24, where it states that the Planning Authority '*will expect all new developments, including the redevelopment and refurbishment of existing buildings, to use energy, water, minerals, materials and other natural resources appropriately, efficiently and with care in order to reduce emissions potentially linked to changes to the climate*'.

### **Residential Annexes**

- 5.13 In accordance with DM6 and SCDC Core Strategy paragraph 5.22, the conversion of existing buildings or the erection of new, ancillary buildings to accommodate, for example, an elderly or disabled dependant, will only be permitted where they are small in scale, well related to the main dwelling and cause no detriment to residential or visual amenity. In particular, because the village is considered to be part of the Countryside, there must not be a material impact on the landscape.

### **Affordable Housing**

- 5.14 SP28 permits new housing to address local needs but only in exceptional circumstances. The exception that relates to Great Bealings concerns the provision of affordable housing. The SCDC Local Plan states (at paragraph 4.95): '*affordable housing will be permitted which meets an identified local need where its provision is supported by a parish plan or statement or Local Needs Housing Survey*'. Under DM1 it is further made clear that any such development must be in keeping with its setting.
- 5.15 The PC commissioned a Housing Needs Survey which was carried out by Community Action Suffolk in 2013 (Appendix 6). The report suggested that there was a potential need for 2/3 units over the next 3 to 5 years.
- 5.16 Of the people who responded to the parish questionnaire in 2013, 95% of people agreed that affordable housing should be subject to the same criteria as other development and should be subject to specific consultation. 56% of responders did not support the provision of affordable Housing. The Parish Council currently has no plans for making any proposals for affordable housing in the village but would deal with any such proposal as set out in Policy BE2.
- 5.17 Where a proposal for Affordable Housing comes forward, appropriate detailed consultation must be conducted both at the parish level and in the area proposed for the development.

**Objective:**

*Affordable housing should be subject to the same criteria as other development and should be subject to local consultation.*

**Policy BE2 – Affordable Housing Development**

*A proposal for a small scale affordable housing development, the potential need for which was indicated by the latest Housing Needs Survey, will be supported provided that:*

- *the proposal contributes to meeting the affordable and social rented needs of people with a local connection;*
- *its use will be governed by an appropriate Section 106 Agreement;*
- *the development is outside any Landscape Protection Area;*

**Flood risk**

- 5.18 Many properties within the village are situated in the Lark Valley. Most are protected from flooding due to the presence of water meadows either side of the river and by a bund that has been constructed in the area of the Boot Street bridge. It is important to ensure that any new development will not be at risk from flooding, does not impede the flow of the River Lark, and does not cause a reduction in flood storage capacity or exacerbate flooding problems elsewhere. A map of the Environment Agency's designated flood zones is attached at Appendix 1.
- 5.19 SCDC's Core Strategy states, at paragraph 5.74: *'it is important to ensure that new development is not at risk from flooding, which would endanger life and damage property. Similarly, it is important to ensure that new development does not impede flood flows, reduce flood storage capacity or exacerbate problems of flooding in areas downstream through an increase in run-off from impermeable surfaces such as roofs and paved areas.'* DM28 provides valuable guidance for dealing with development proposals which may impact on the flood plain. It will also be necessary to consult the Environment Agency on any proposal which may be considered to pose a flood risk.

**Objective:**

*No new development should take place in flood risk areas both so as to avoid any impairment to the flow or runoff of flood water and to avoid intrusion on the landscape value of the river valley.*

**Policy BE3 – Avoidance of Flood Risk**

*The distinctive valley landscape of the village reflects the presence of the River Lark and related water courses. Development proposals must show that they:*

- *minimise flood risk;*
- *will not impede surface water run-off from existing buildings or structures or roads;*
- *incorporate design features that negate any potential flood risk to the new or adjacent buildings otherwise arising from the development.*

5.20 Great Bealings has one scheduled monument - the Boot Street Bridge, pictured, and fourteen Grade 2 buildings listed by Historic England, details of which can be found on the Historic England website. A summary of their citations is included in Appendix 2 together with photographs. These include some outstanding examples such as Seckford Hall, Great Bealings House and the Old Rectory. These are recognised as being of national historic and architectural importance and are protected by law. Historic England is responsible directly for the bridge and SCDC controls what work may be carried out on the listed buildings. Demolition or alteration of any sort must have Listed Building Consent as well as any Planning Permission that might be required.



*Boot Street bridge*

#### **Non-Designated Heritage Assets (NDHAs)**

5.21 Whilst not being of national importance there are a number of other buildings and structures in Great Bealings which are of local architectural or historic interest or make a valuable contribution to the character of the village and should be considered as assets. The responses to the Questionnaire made it clear that many people in the village want more protection for unlisted buildings that give character to the village. It is, therefore, important that these are recognised, valued and understood so that future alterations or additions are given due consideration in the interests of maintaining and enhancing a sense of Great Bealings' identity.

5.22 The NPPF<sup>[1]</sup> has encouraged local communities, in partnership with their local authority, to draw up a list of NDHAs. These need not all be buildings but can include walls, landscape

areas, sites, places, monuments, historic post boxes or other structures and artefacts. A list of such assets based on SCDC's agreed guidelines has been drawn up in consultation with SCDC's Conservation Officer. SCDC has published these guidelines (Appendix 4) which are based on those set out by Historic England and it is proposed that these are adopted under the provisions of this Plan. In summary, each building or structure should meet one or more of the following criteria:

- it makes a contribution to the identity of the parish e.g. Grotto Farm, Lodge Road; Hill House, Orchard Lane.
- it is of local architectural or historic interest e.g. The War Memorial, Hall Farm Road.
- it is unique to the parish e.g. Lodge Cottage, Lodge Road.
- it has group value that is a recognisable part of the parish e.g. Rose Cottage, castellated water tower and The Coach House, Playford Mount.
- it is a good example of conversion, alteration or extension that is appropriate to the parish e.g. Bealings Barn, Grundisburgh Road; extension to Kiln Farm Cottage.

5.23 The full list of current NDHAs with brief descriptions and identification photographs is included in Appendix 3. The list may be amended at any time by the addition of properties that meet the criteria or the removal of those that are no longer considered to be of local importance or whose owners no longer wish them to be included.

5.24 The primary purpose of identifying a property as an NDHA is to preserve and, where possible, enhance it. There is a presumption in favour of retaining and repairing NDHAs unless it can be clearly demonstrated that a building is no longer of local importance or is beyond repair. The proposed redevelopment would have to demonstrate substantial benefits for the community.

5.25 Inclusion on the list does not affect individual permitted development rights and, importantly, is not a first step in the process of being listed by English Heritage. However where a planning application is involved, the effect of such a proposal on an NDHA will need to be taken into account by the planning authority in determining the application. A balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the importance of the asset.

5.26 Whether works require a full Planning Application or are covered by Permitted Development Rights, all such works would be encouraged, as suggested above, to follow relevant design guidance and advice. Full details of proposed design criteria and materials are to be found in the Appendix 4. Any replacement should be of equal or higher standard of design, should reflect the character and density of the surrounding area, and should incorporate sustainability features. Contemporary design may have a place but would need a very considered approach and response to its location. Traditional materials such as brick, render, timber and clay tiles can be employed in a contemporary way and modern materials

need not be ruled out if used creatively. A sensitive contemporary design could well become tomorrow's heritage asset.

***Objective:***

***The value of Non Designated Heritage Assets should be recognised and such properties given additional protection.***

**Policy BE4 – Non-Designated Heritage Assets (NDHA)**

*Development proposals affecting any NDHA listed in Appendix 3 (which will be subject to periodic review and potential update) must include:*

- *a Heritage Statement detailing the potential impact of the proposal on the significance of the asset, and*
- *a statement of justification for the scale of any harm or loss, together with details of any mitigation measures proposed.*

*All proposals relating to the redevelopment of an NDHA must demonstrate that the development:*

- *will include high quality design characteristics that reflect the distinctive nature of the heritage asset lost;*
- *respects the context and setting of the surrounding area; and*
- *will incorporate the use of traditional materials in the context of its setting.*

## **6. NON-STATUTORY ANNEX**

6.1 While the Plan as set out above deals with those things that are within the formal scope of a Neighbourhood Plan, there are other matters which will be considered by the PC in the context of the Plan and in the course of its wider considerations. The PC will be guided by the Plan and its strategic approach to the way that developments of any sort are proposed that might affect the village and will seek to engage the local community in relation to issues that fall outside the policies set out in the Plan itself.

### **6.2 Permitted Developments**

Permitted developments such as porches, minor extensions, sheds, garages, etc. that do not require planning permission would not need to undertake landscape, visual impact, or ecological surveys but consultation with the Parish Council would be encouraged in all cases to guard against removal of screening hedges and trees so as to maintain the rural appearance of the street scene.

### **6.3 Enhancements**

Opportunities shall be sought to encourage:

- Tree preservation and new planting;
- Management and enhancement of wildlife habitats, for example by the creation of a community asset which can be managed as a wildlife reserve;
- Responsible best farming practices, including support for farmers in the village who might wish to apply for agri-environmental schemes and can show local community support;
- Community engagement in the above activities.

### **6.4 Traffic**

This is often the most contentious of issues for a rural village. Great Bealings already participates in a voluntary speed watch scheme. An initiative has also been launched to bring together a number of villages on the northern borders of Ipswich to consider the traffic implications of the proposed new settlement in the Westerfield road area. SCC is the body responsible for traffic matters, but combined action will be the best way to respond to these issues as they develop.

6.5 The PC registered an interest in the Quiet Lanes scheme proposed and trialled by SCC, but the scheme has been very slow to get off the ground, largely due to lack of finance. However the PC has now been asked to nominate those roads which could be considered under the scheme. If the proposal were to go forwards, the PC would have to consult with interested parties regarding the actual areas to be covered, the placing of signs, and other matters. This consultation would be separate to that required for the Plan itself. The roads suggested include:

- Seckford Hall Road
- Lodge Road

- Rosery Lane
- Lower Street
- Kiln Lane
- Hasketon Road
- Grundisburgh Road

6.6 Should any scheme come forward to build a northern bypass round Ipswich, the Plan gives us a strong basis for arguing for appropriate protection and the PC would be guided accordingly.

6.7 **Broadband**

The PC will give consideration to any scheme that provides better broadband access to the village. At the moment speeds through the Grundisburgh exchange are very slow. Opportunities will be sought to consider funding for any such scheme from whatever sources might be available.

6.8 **National Infrastructure**

We can expect considerable disruption when the cabling is laid for the EA1 offshore wind farm (see map of cable route at Appendix), especially now we know that capacity will be included for a further scheme in the future. The Plan provides evidence of landscape, habitat, and other features that are worthy of protection and thus gives us a basis for arguing for suitable measures to offset or alleviate any disruption, either during construction or during the operational period. We are aware that there will be access points to allow maintenance of the cable, and some of these will be in sensitive areas. Joint pressure from neighbouring parishes will be of particular importance in this context.

**7. REFERENCES – accessed 1 September 2015**

1. National Planning Policy Framework Ref: ISBN 9781409834137 Accessed via: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2)
2. Suffolk Coastal District Local Plan- Core Strategy &Development Management Policies; Development Plan Document July 2013 – Suffolk Coastal District Council, Melton Hill, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 1AU
3. Suffolk’s Nature Strategy published by Suffolk County Council, Suffolk Wildlife Trust, RSPB and the National Trust - [www.suffolk.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/suffolks-countryside-and-wildlife/protecting-the-environment/suffolk-nature-strategy/#sthash.Ri13bwWI.dpuf](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/suffolks-countryside-and-wildlife/protecting-the-environment/suffolk-nature-strategy/#sthash.Ri13bwWI.dpuf)
4. Suffolk County Council’s Descriptions and Guidance Notes on the landscape character areas throughout the County can be accessed via its website: [www.suffolklandscape.org.uk/default.aspx](http://www.suffolklandscape.org.uk/default.aspx) and follow links to Landscape Typology and PDF Downloads:
  - (a) 4. Ancient Rolling Farmlands EP/Edit1/02.08.10
  - (b) 4. Guidance Note Ancient Rolling Farmlands EP/Edit1/1.10.10;
  - (c) 19. Rolling Valley Farmlands and Furze EP/Edit1/02.08.10
  - (d) 19. Guidance Note Rolling Valley Farmlands and Furze EP/Edit1/1.10.10
5. Suffolk Coastal District Plan Remaining saved Policies accessed via [www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourdistrict/planning/policy/local-plan/saved-policies](http://www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourdistrict/planning/policy/local-plan/saved-policies)

# Great Bealings Neighbourhood Plan

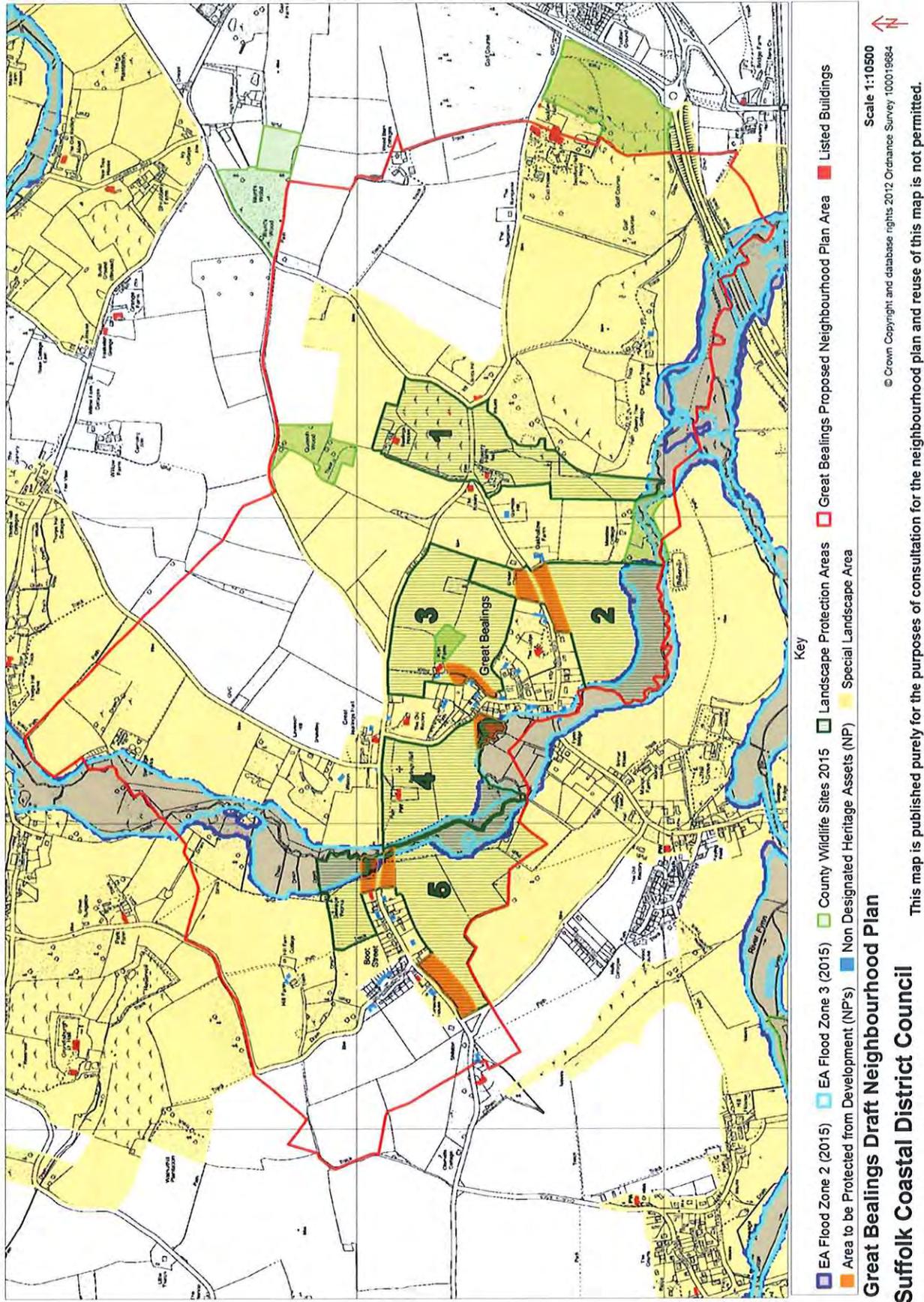
## *Appendices*

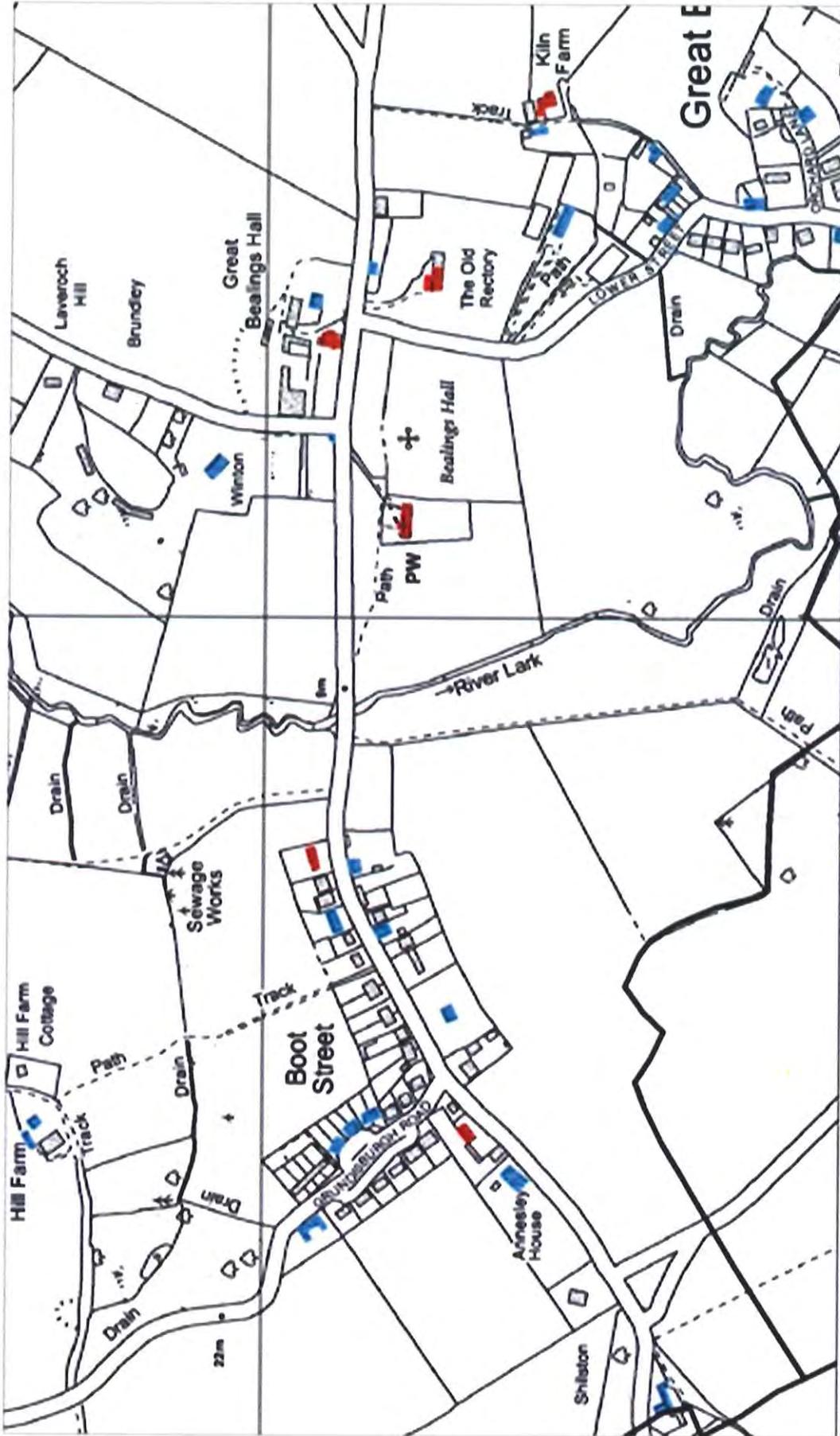
1. *Maps*
2. *Listed Buildings*
3. *Non Designated Heritage Assets*
4. *SCDC Guidance on design criteria and materials*
5. *Community Engagement Strategy*
6. *Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire Responses*
7. *NPPF Guidance re. Neighbourhood Planning*
8. *Housing Needs Survey*
9. *Landscape and Wildlife Evaluation*



## Appendix 1 – Maps

Please note that these maps are published for the Neighbourhood Plan consultation only and must not be reproduced for any other purpose. The maps are available on the website, [www.gbnp.co.uk](http://www.gbnp.co.uk)



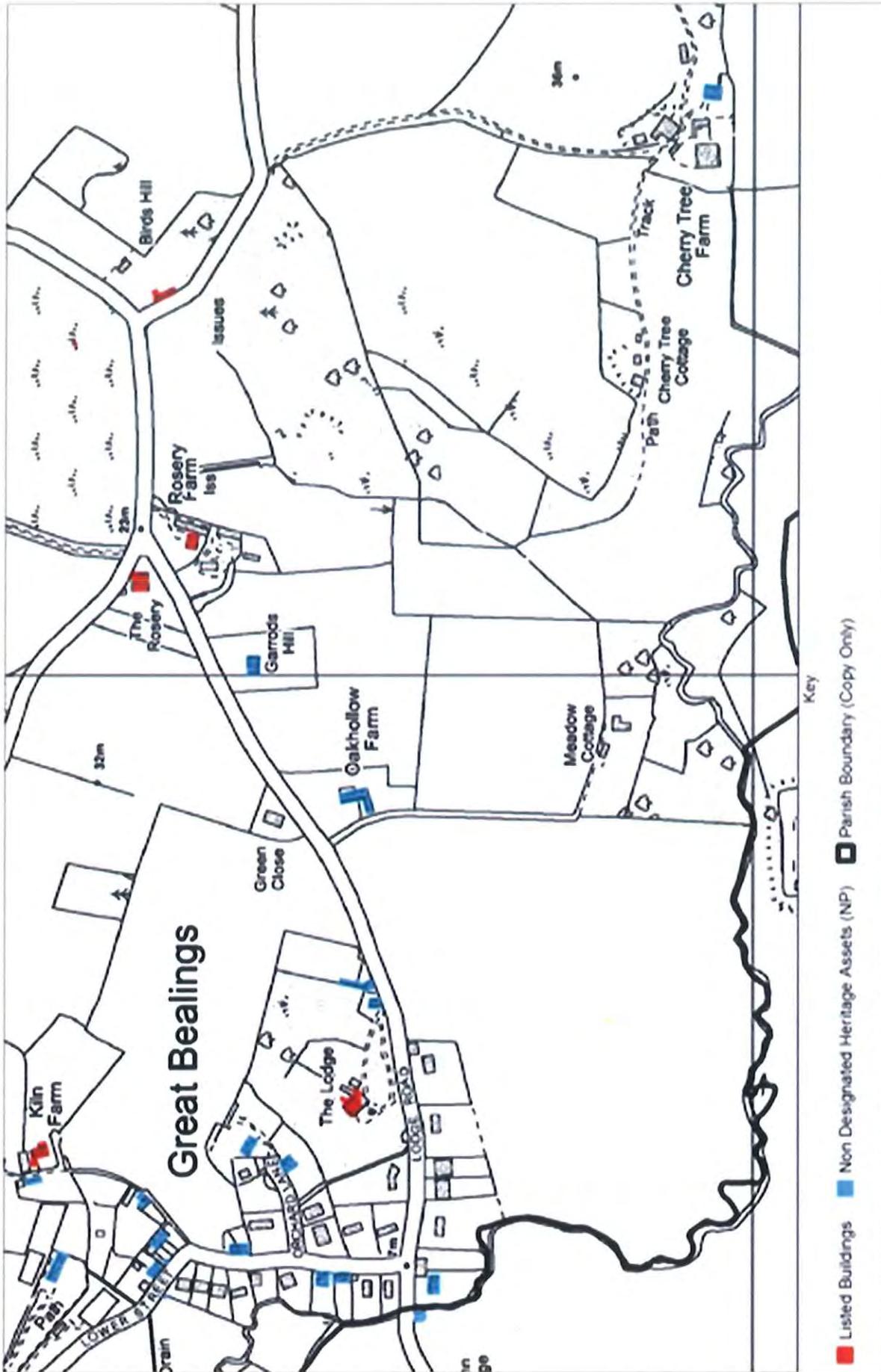


**Key**

- Listed Buildings
- Non Designated Heritage Assets (NP)
- Parish Boundary (Copy Only)

**Great Bealings Draft Neighbourhood Plan (November 2015)  
Suffolk Coastal District Council**

Scale 1:5000  
© Crown Copyright and database rights 2012 Ordnance Survey 100019684



**Great Bealings Draft Neighbourhood Plan (November 2015)**  
**Suffolk Coastal District Council**

Scale 1:5000  
 © Crown Copyright and database rights 2012 Ordnance Survey 100019684

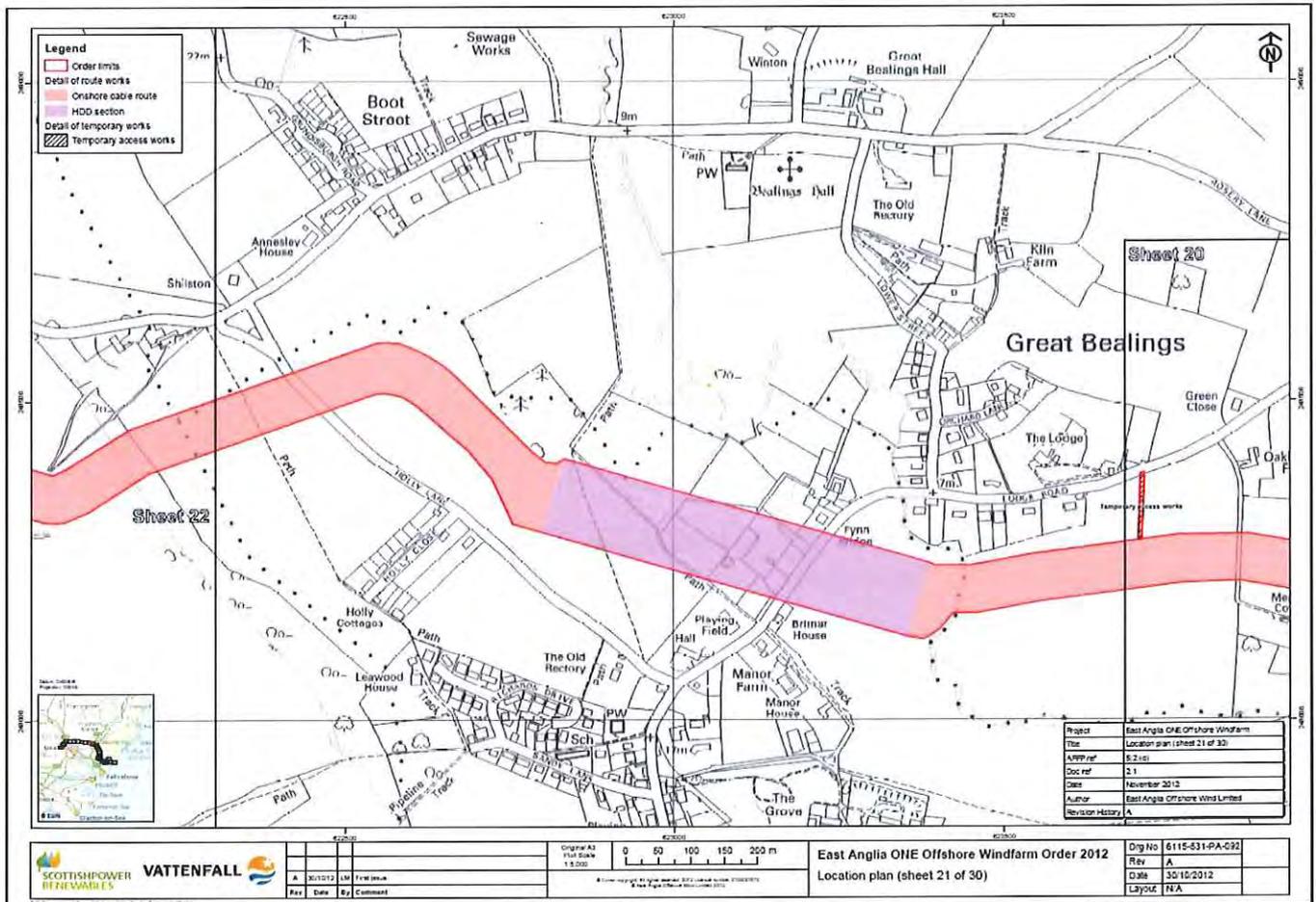
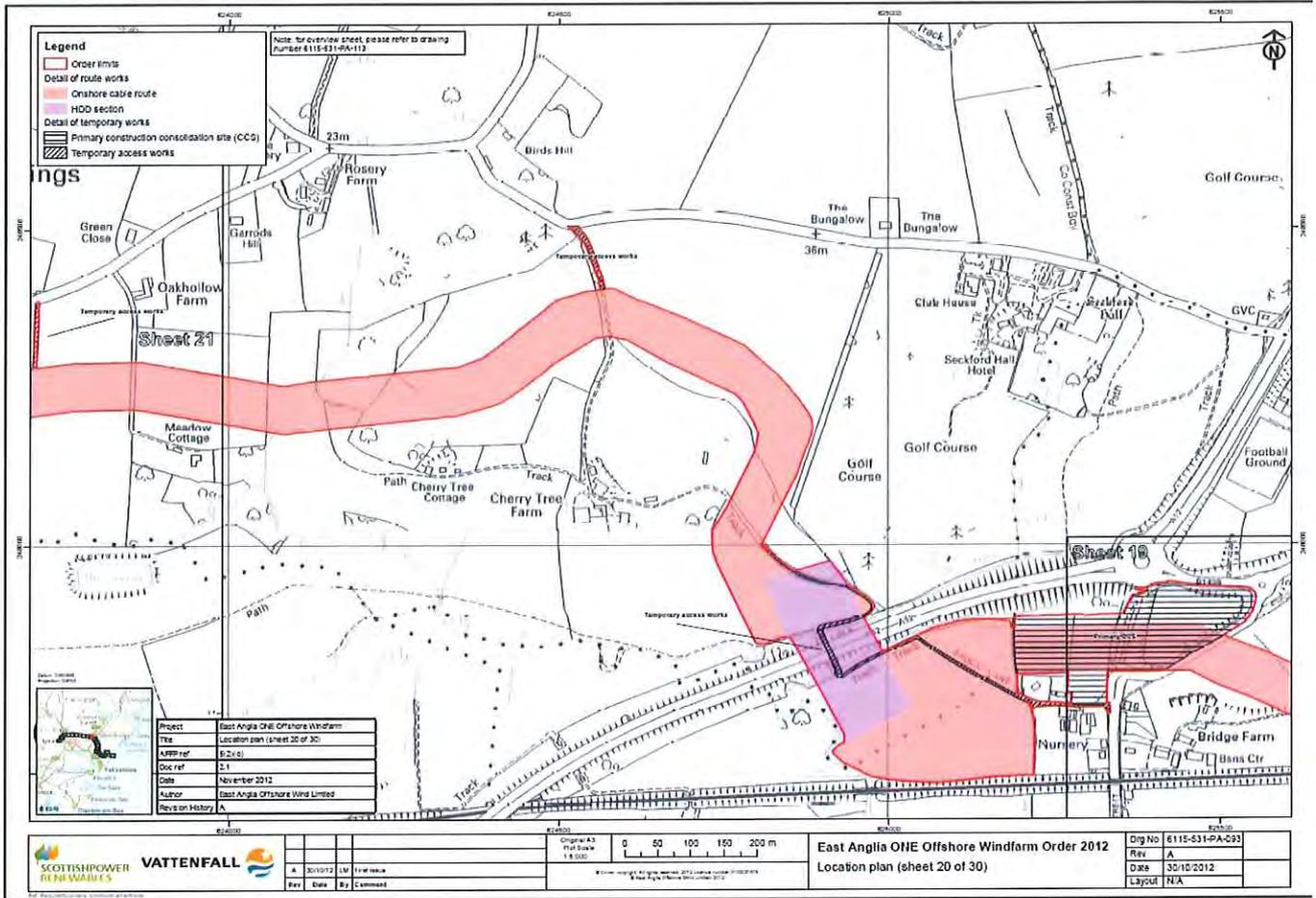


Key

- Listed Buildings
- Non Designated Heritage Assets (NP)
- Parish Boundary (Copy Only)

**Great Bealings Draft Neighbourhood Plan (November 2015)**  
**Suffolk Coastal District Council**

Scale 1:5000  
 © Crown Copyright and database rights 2012 Ordnance Survey 100019664



## Appendix 2 - Scheduled Monument and Listed Buildings

### SCHEDULED MONUMENT

- 1 **Boot Street Bridge.** Single arch bridge of fine quality brickwork with stone cappings to end piers. Built 1830



### LISTED BUILDINGS (1-13 Grade 2 listed; 14 Grade 2\* listed)

- 1 **Barn at Seckford Hall and Spur wall.**  
C16 or C17 six bay structure in red English bond brick with tile roof
- 2 **Seckford Hall**  
Altered/rebuilt c1553 by Thomas Seckford as a country house. Red English bond brick with tiled roof. Crow-stepped gable ends. Thomas Seckford was a senior member of court of Queen Elizabeth 1. The building became a hotel late 1940s. Described by historian Norman Scarfe as having the most romantic façade in England.
- 3 **Great Bealings Hall, Hall Farm Road**  
Timber framed house with colour washed render and plain tiled roof, c16 with c17 and c19 additions.
- 4 **Bealings House, Rosery Lane**  
Late c18 house in red English and Flemish bond brick with plain tile roof. Two storey with attic. Seven bay front with parapet wall. Doorway with Ionic columns and pediment over.  
Major Edward Moor bought the house on his retirement from the army in 1806. He was a Fellow of the Royal Society and a renowned authority on Indian mythology.
- 5 **Garden Ornament, Bealings House, Rosery Lane**  
C19 knapped flint and flint rubble with ashlar dressings pyramid with arched niches containing Indian figures. Built by Major Moor and reputed to house his collection of heathen idols so that they might come to no harm.
- 6 **Birds Hill, Seckford Hall Road**  
Probably c14 timber framed hall house with c18 and c19 additions.  
Colour washed render with plain tile roof. Part single and part two storey
- 7 **Kiln Farm House, Kiln Lane**  
C16 or early c17 with addition of c1813. Timber framed with red brick skin in Flemish bond, clay pantile roof. C20 sympathetic alterations and extensions.
- 8 **Old Rectory Cottages, Boot Street (The Old Vicarage)**  
Listed as two cottages, now a single dwelling house. Late c15 with later additions and alteration. Timber framed with painted render and a brick skin in parts, pantile roof. H plan with projecting cross wings at either end. Was the rectory from c15 until the new rectory was built late c18/early c19.



9 **Rosery Farm House**

C16 timber framed with colour washed render and c19 brick skin with a plain tiled roof, originally thatched.



10 **The Boot, Boot Street**

C17 timber framed with brick skin and render, with a plain tile roof. Was a public house until the mid 1960s when it became a dwelling house. Recently sensitively restored and extended.



11 **The Lodge, Lodge Road**

Two storey house. Early and Mid c19. Stuccoed brick with a slate roof. Surrounded by attractive woodland. Probably originated as a farmhouse c17 or c18. Has historic smuggling associations.



12 **The Old Rectory, Hall Farm Road**

House, formerly rectory, Late c18/early c19 with c20 additions. Suffolk white brick in Flemish bond and some red brick, with a slate roof. Front has three bays symmetrically disposed. Central semi-circular bow window with plaster buttresses to either side. The rector, Canon Moor lived here for 42 years (1844-1886). The writer Lady Winifred Fortescue (née Beech) was born here in 1888 where her father was then rector. More recently it was home of the late Lord Belstead who was a local farmer but also Leader of the House of Lords Northern Ireland minister, Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk and a major benefactor for the new sports field and playground.



13 **The Rosery, Rosery Lane**

Two storey house. Mid c19 with c20 alterations and additions. Yellow Suffolk brick in Flemish bond with a slate roof. Makes a loose group with Bealings House and Rosery Farm House.



14 **The church of St Mary**

Conspicuous visual reference point. This is the jewel in the crown of Great Bealings' listed buildings and is the only fully public building. The building has some remnants from the c13, but is mainly c14 and c15 including the tower with its flush work decoration. There are later c16 and c19 alterations.

The main walls are of rubble flint work with ashlar dressings. Roof is of plain clay tile. The north porch of 1520 is of red brick in English bond and plain clay tile roof over a hammer beam structure.

Inside there are monuments to Thomas Seckford and John Clench who was the son of the great Elizabethan judge, John Clench. Canon Moor (son of Edward Moor of Bealings House) was responsible for the restoration of the church in 1842-1851 making it much as we know it today.



### Appendix 3 - Non Designated Heritage Assets

- 1 Cherry Tree Farm  
C19 brick. Probably part is timber framed  

- 2 Grotto Farm, Lodge Road  
C17 timber framed linked barn and house. Recently restored.  

- 3 Waveney Cottage, Lodge Road  
C19 with sympathetic modern extension  

- 4 Lodge Cottage, Lodge Road  
Early c19 Suffolk white brick with slate roof. Only example in Suffolk.  

- 5 Southernhay, Lodge Road  
Contemporary single storey version of a traditional Suffolk long house with projecting cross wings. Clay tile roof, rendered walls. Built 1982. Architect: Ronald Geary.  

- 6 Village sign, Lodge Road  
Designed and carved by Maureen Midwinter.  

- 7 Thorneycroft, Lower Street  
Rebuilt 1820 incorporating earlier timber frame structure.  

- 8 1 and 2 Rosery Cottages, Lower Street  
Two cottages, one dwelling with sideways extension. Good example of a sensitive extension using similar materials and colours. Old and new dormer windows respect each other in scale.  

- 9 Hill House, Orchard Lane, off Lower Street  
C19 brick and pantile structure. Sensitive extension at rear. Prominent location on site of former mill.  


- 10 The Cottage, Orchard Lane, off Lower Street  
C18 Suffolk white brick and soft red brick at rear with slate roof.



- 11 Rill Cottage, Kiln Lane  
Individual property attached to Barrack Cottages group. Render with tile mansard roof.



- 12 Kiln Farm Cottage, Kiln Lane  
Former red brick barn converted to dwelling house. Recent rear extension in timber frame with timber cladding. Contrast between brick and timber works well and is a good example of an appropriate extension.



- 13 Former telephone kiosk, Lower Street  
K6 telephone kiosks were produced in 1935 to commemorate silver jubilee of King George V. Designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, architect of Liverpool cathedral and the former London Embankment power station (now Tate Modern).



- 14 The Old Post Office, Lower Street  
19c former post office and village shop. Local historic interest. Render with tile roof. Contemporary extension at back with roof shape expressed internally.



- 15 GR post box, The Old Post Office, Lower Street  
George V, circa 1930. Historic interest.



- 16 Village well, Lower Street  
Brick. Historic interest.



- 17 Barrack Cottages, Lower Street  
Group value. Associated with Napoleonic wars when Woodbridge was a garrison town hence the name. Makes a nice visual stop where Lower Street turns left.



- 18 Croft House, Lower Street  
C19 Victorian house set back from road. Former home of Admiral Pelham Aldrich.



- 19 The Granary, Hall Farm Road  
 Good example of redundant timber framed agricultural building converted into a dwelling. Minimum openings in wall and roof allowing roof and wall to dominate. Architects: Gorniak and McKechnie.
- 20 The War Memorial, corner Hall Farm Road and Hasketon Road  
 Built after WW1. Historic interest.
- 21 Winton, Hasketon Road  
 Built 1920s, exploiting aspect and orientation. Prominent siting make it an important visual reference point.
- 22 Rose Cottage, castellated water tower, The Coach House (Playford Mount)  
 Group value, familiar landmark.
- 23 Annesley Hall, Boot Street  
 1912 'mock Tudor' style. Architect: Harold Hooper. Road side gateway is a copy of Cardinal Wolsey's gate in Ipswich. Visual reference point and reciprocal counterpoint to Winton.
- 24 Annesley, Boot Street  
 Stucco Victorian villa (c1860) with contemporary extension at side and rear that relates to but does not copy the Victorian part.
- 25 Bealings Barn, Grundisburgh Road  
 Good example of redundant timber framed agricultural barn converted to a dwelling, Early example of passive energy design principles (1978).
- 26 Nos 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, Grundisburgh Road  
 Group value. 1960s, built as rural council houses designed to relate to Suffolk vernacular.
- 27 The Homestead, Boot Street  
 1930's single storey dwelling, extended over the years with sympathetic scale.



- 28 The Red House, Boot Street  
17c timber framed rendered dwelling, Siting at right angles close to road adds variety to the street scene.



- 29 The Old Boot Cottage, Boot Street  
17/18c rendered timber framed long cottage.



- 30 Ivy Cottage, Boot Street  
Date 1788 on wall. Rendered, interesting windows.



#### **Appendix 4 – SCDC Guidance on design criteria and materials**

Suffolk Coastal District Council produces the following design guide publications known as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG):

No 13 Historic Buildings: Repairs, Alterations and Extensions.

No 16 House Alterations & Extensions

No 7 The Location and Design of Small Residential Developments

These documents give very useful visual design advice and it is recommended that they are studied before contemplating alterations or extensions of any sort. These are available online and in PDF format on [www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourdistrict/planning/policy/spg](http://www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourdistrict/planning/policy/spg)

For further advice on Listed Buildings or Local Heritage Assets (LHA's) a useful contact is the Conservation Officer of Suffolk Coastal District Council, telephone 01394 444616

The following relevant organisations may be useful for more detailed reference and do provide advisory leaflets, booklets, technical pamphlets or books:

Historic England  
1 Waterhouse Street  
138 – 142 Holborn  
London EC1N 2ST  
020 7973 3700  
[www.historicengland.org.uk](http://www.historicengland.org.uk)

Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings  
37 Spital Square  
London E1 6DY  
020 7377 1644  
[www.spab.org.uk](http://www.spab.org.uk)

The Victorian Society  
1 Priory Gardens  
Bedford Park  
London W4 1TT  
0181 994 1019  
[www.victoriansociety.org.uk](http://www.victoriansociety.org.uk)

Suffolk Preservation Society  
Little Hall  
Market Place  
Lavenham  
Sudbury  
Suffolk CO10 9QZ  
01787 247179  
[www.suffolksociety.org.uk](http://www.suffolksociety.org.uk)

The Georgian Group  
6 Fitzroy Square  
London W1P 6DX  
0171 387 1720  
[www.georgiangroup.org.uk](http://www.georgiangroup.org.uk)

The Royal Institute of British Architects  
can give advice on using and appointing  
appropriate local architects.  
66 Portland Place, London, W1B 1AD  
020 7307 3700  
[www.architecture.com](http://www.architecture.com)

The advice of the SCDC Planning Department should be sought whether alterations or other works may require planning permission or are permitted development only.

If permitted development, the attached schedule of colour photographs may be of assistance to Great Bealings residents in giving ideas of sympathetic colours, materials, details that would be appropriate in a village setting. This design guide sheet may be added to from time to time.

## **Appendix 5 – Community Engagement Strategy**

### **1. Introduction**

This Strategy has been prepared to guide and record the process of community engagement so as to produce a community-led Neighbourhood Plan for Great Bealings (the 'Plan'). It sets out the process followed by the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group, constituted as a sub-committee of the Parish Council, to ensure that the Plan represented as wide a range as possible of views expressed by the residents who will be voting in the Plan referendum.

Great Bealings is a small village. Resources are necessarily constrained, both in terms of money but especially in terms of those who are able and willing to contribute to the process by helping with information gathering, analyzing existing data, collecting photographic evidence, drafting, updating the website, and distributing leaflets as required. Effective engagement has been created by ensuring that this group includes as many people as practical given these constraints.

From the outset we have sought to be open and transparent in our approach. The open days we have arranged have been well attended and the response rate to the Questionnaire was remarkably high. This suggests that there is a high level of engagement and that our approach has been successful. This is important in order to create confidence in the Plan as it is submitted to the Parish Council, SCDC, residents, and in due course to those who will vote on it in a referendum.

We have sought to:

1. Show willingness to openly encourage opinions and suggestions from all individuals and organisations within the community;
2. Make every effort to understand any and all views expressed;
3. Demonstrate, in a form that is readily accessible and easily understood by the whole community, how the Plan reflects the views and opinions expressed during each stage of engagement.

### **2. Why do we need an Engagement Strategy?**

The Engagement Strategy is a way of setting out the steps we have taken, from the start to the end of the process, to ensure that it is a process that benefits from community involvement and that the community knows this.

The Objective of the Great Bealings Neighbourhood Plan Working Group is to write a Plan that: 'maintains the special character of our small village by protecting its natural setting while ensuring that the community who have chosen to live here can control, shape and contribute to how it evolves for the benefit of themselves, future residents and subsequent generations.' [Mission Statement – July 2013]

In order to meet this objective we have sought to achieve rigorous and effective communication, engagement and consultation with all members of the community, including residents, landowners, businesses, and neighbouring communities. We are required to create a Plan, based on the weight of evidence gathered, that contains effective and strategic Policies agreed by the community as a whole.

### **3. When and where to consult?**

The engagement strategy required us to:

- Publicise our intentions;
- Hold public open days in the village hall to seek views from the community;
- Write a Questionnaire based on the range of views expressed at the open days;
- Distribute and collect the questionnaire ensuring that every household was covered;
- Analyse the responses;

- Hold a further open day to publicise the responses;
- Gather evidence in support of the proposed approach, using the open day responses, the Housing Needs survey, and the responses to the Questionnaire;
- Draft a Plan and supporting policies based on the responses obtained and the evidence collected;
- Submit the draft to the Parish Council for approval;
- Present the draft Plan to a further public meeting;
- Submit the Plan to SCDC.

#### **4. Who to consult?**

As a small village we have been able to ensure that at every stage we either deliver information to every household, publicise events, etc., in the benefice magazine that is distributed to all households in the parish, post relevant information on the Great Bealings website and latterly on the Plan website, or a combination of the above.

We have included businesses active in the parish (of which there are very few) and the neighbouring parish councils of Playford and Little Bealings.

Other bodies may also need to be consulted on the draft Plan. These include:

- The Environment Agency
- English Heritage
- Natural England
- The Police
- SCC
- SWT

#### **5. Consultation**

A full Consultation Statement, including responses to the formal Public Consultation, has been submitted to SCDC at the same time as the Plan, and is on the website, [www.gbnp.co.uk](http://www.gbnp.co.uk).

## Appendix 6 – Questionnaire and responses

[Percentages are based on replies received – 120 copies distributed; 79 copies returned; 66% response rate.]

(a) Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire – see this document on the website, [www.gbnp.co.uk](http://www.gbnp.co.uk)

(b) Response Analysis (65% response rate)

○ *Employment Status*

Full time	16%
Self employed	22%
Part time worker	12%
Retired	36%
Business Director/Owner	4%
Student	4%
Other	6%

○ *Age*

18-24	6%
25-34	2%
35-44	11%
45-64	37%
64-74	26%
75+	18%

○ *Gender* 50/50

○ *Years in residence*

Less than 1	13%
1-5	18%
6-10	5%
11-15	16%
16-20	13%
21-25	4%
26-30	8%
31-35	10%
36-40	8%
41+	5%

○ *Reasons to live in Great Bealings*

Schools	7%
Work	12%
Prefer Village to Town	24%
Rural Landscape	23%
Friends nearby	5%
Walks	16%
Family links	7%
Lived here as a child	6%

○ *Reasons for liking life in Great Bealings*

1. Tranquillity
2. Family links
3. Neighbours and Community
4. Easy to reach Ipswich, London, etc.
5. Unspoilt landscape setting
6. Green

- *Readership of Benefice Newsletter*
  1. 68% every month
  2. 17% most months
  3. 8% occasional
  4. 7% never
- *Use of Parish Website*
  1. 7% once a month
  2. 5% once a week
  3. 38% less than monthly
  4. 37% never
  5. 69% thought Parish Council should use it more proactively
- *Affordable Housing*
  1. 95% agreed that Affordable Housing should be subject to the same criteria as any other development and should be subject to specific local consultation.
  2. 56% of respondents did not support such provision.
- *Right to Build*
  1. 68% would support a Community Shop scheme
  2. 51% would support proposals for small business units
- *Agreement with Stated Aims of Plan*
  1. 94% agreed with the stated aims of the Neighbourhood Plan.
  2. 6% disagreed:
  - Not enough affordable housing
  - No plan to bring in employment
  - Too restrictive
  - Risk of stopping progress
  3. 84% agreed with SP28 (Other Village) status under SCDC Local Plan
  4. 16% disagreed within which:
    - a. some supported modernisation/enlargement irrespective of size
    - b. Some would like to see executive housing schemes
    - c. Significant support for smaller units
- *Support for Landscape Protection*
  1. 97% supported the existing SLA designation of Lark Valley
  2. 97% agreed that natural assets should be considered in the context of any new planning application
  3. 92% would like to see specific protection for habitats, both flora and fauna
  4. 86% would like to see a conservation plan designed to protect the landscape.
- *Support for NDHA list*

72% wanted more protection for Non Designated Heritage Assets
- *Flood Risk*

98% agreed that no new development should take place in flood risk areas as defined by the Environment Agency's map of the Lark Valley.

## **Appendix 7 - NPPF Guidance re. Neighbourhood Planning**

### **Extract from DCLG/NPPF/PPG**

A summary of the key stages in neighbourhood planning

(Paragraph: 080 Reference ID: 41-080-20150209)

#### **Step 1: Designating neighbourhood area**

- Relevant body (parish council, prospective neighbourhood forum or community organisation) submits an application to the local planning authority (LPA) to designate a neighbourhood area
- local planning authority publicises and consults on the area application for minimum six weeks (or minimum of four weeks where the area to which the application relates is the whole of the area of a parish council and is wholly within the area of one local planning authority)
- local planning authority designates a neighbourhood area within the statutory timescales
- in an area without a town or parish council a prospective neighbourhood forum submits an application to be the designated neighbourhood forum for a neighbourhood area
- local planning authority publicises and consults on the forum application for minimum six weeks
- local planning authority takes decision on whether to designate the neighbourhood forum

#### **Step 2: Preparing a draft neighbourhood plan**

- Qualifying body develops proposals (advised or assisted by the local planning authority)
- gather baseline information and evidence
- engage and consult those living and working in the neighbourhood area and those with an interest in or affected by the proposals (e.g. service providers)
- talk to land owners
- identify and assess options
- determine whether a plan is likely to have significant environmental effect
- start to prepare proposals documents e.g. basic conditions statement

#### **Step 3: Pre-submission publicity & consultation**

The qualifying body:

- publicises the draft plan and invites representations
- consults the consultation bodies as appropriate
- sends a copy of the draft plan to the local planning authority
- where European Obligations apply, complies with relevant publicity and consultation requirements
- considers consultation responses and amends plan if appropriate
- prepares consultation statement and other proposal documents

#### **Step 4: Submission of a neighbourhood plan proposal to the local planning authority**

- Qualifying body submits the plan proposal to the local planning authority
- Local planning authority checks that submitted proposal complies with all relevant legislation
- If the local planning authority finds that the plan meets the legal requirements it:
  - publicises the proposal for minimum 6 weeks and invites representations
  - notifies consultation bodies referred to in the consultation statement
  - appoints an independent examiner (with the agreement of the qualifying body)

**Step 5: Independent Examination**

- local planning authority sends plan proposal and representation to the independent examiner
- independent examiner undertakes examination
- independent examiner issues a report to the local planning authority and qualifying body
- local planning authority publishes report
- local planning authority considers report and reaches own view (save in respect of community right to build orders where the report is binding)
- local planning authority takes the decision on whether to send the plan / Order to referendum

**Steps 6 and 7: Referendum and Making the neighbourhood plan (bringing it into force)**

- relevant council publishes information statement
- relevant council publishes notice of referendum/s
- polling takes place (in a business area an additional referendum is held)
- results declared
- subject to results local planning authority considers plan in relation to EU obligations and Convention rights
- If the plan is compatible with EU obligations and does not breach Convention rights – local planning authority makes the plan.

**COMMUNITY  
ACTION  
SUFFOLK**

Strengthening the voluntary and community sector



**GREAT BEALINGS  
HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY REPORT**

**DECEMBER 2013**

Report produced by:

Sunila Osborne  
Rural Housing Enabler

Community Action Suffolk  
Brightspace  
160 Hadleigh Road  
Ipswich  
IP2 0HH  
Telephone: 01473 345344  
Website: [www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk](http://www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk)

Copyright©communityactionsuffolk 2013

## CONTENTS

<u>Title</u>	<u>Page Number</u>
Executive summary	3 - 6
General Parish Housing Information	7 - 10
Current Household Members in need	11 - 15
People wishing to return	16 - 17
Next Stage	18
Appendix A; General Opinions	19-20
Appendix B; Suggested Sites	21
Appendix C; Suffolk Coastal District Council Housing Data	22
Appendix D; Housing Data	23
Appendix E; HNS (first 3 pages)	24-27
Appendix F; Community Contextual Information	28-29

## GREAT BEALINGS HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY(HNS)

### Executive Summary

The Parish Council agreed to carry out a HNS with a closing date of 18 October 2013.

The Community Action Suffolk Services toolkit was used to produce the survey data.

From the HNS, 59.40% of respondents were in favour of an affordable housing scheme, showing overall support, with 35% of the returns indicating that they would not support affordable housing in the parish.

The Great Bealings HNS of 18 October 2013 received 63 household responses from a total of 120 of survey forms issued giving a 57.5% return rate, with the majority of respondents in favour of a small affordable housing scheme for people with a local connection.

### Profile of survey respondents

- 63 Household Responses
- 163 Individuals
- Greatest number of responses received from those aged between 45-74 years of age
- 122 Multiple Choice responses received

Out of 63 HNS returned, 5 households responded that they have a current housing need, totalling 6 people.

Out of 63 HNS returned, 2 of those households responded identifying a need for 3 people (with a local connection) wishing to return to or live in the Parish.

This shows a total of 7 households, 9 people in need of affordable housing in Great Bealings.

The Gateway to Home Choice (GTHC) register indicates there is 1 household claiming a local connection to Great Bealings for a 2 bed dwelling.

Great Bealings Parish Council may want to consider those registered on the GTHC when deciding on the final number of homes they may wish to provide.

NEED INDICATED FROM HNS

Current household;

- 5 future households identified from the HNS, with a total of 6 people in need. Although the make-up of the future households indicated from the HNS shows:

○ Single people	3
○ Single Parent Family (with or expecting children)	0
○ Couple	1
○ Two Parent Family (with or expecting children)	1
○ <b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>

People wishing to return

- 2 future households identified from the HNS, with a total of 3 people in need.

○ Single people	1
○ Single Parent Family (with or expecting children)	1
○ <b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>

## Recommendations

The analysis from the Housing Needs Survey provides an indication of those in need of affordable housing and who have a local connection to Great Bealings.

The recommended number of affordable homes a parish may wish to provide is based generally on a third of the overall need indicated by the survey, as some respondents may withdraw, move away, may not be eligible or be housed by other means during the planning & building process of any future scheme.

Therefore the recommendation for Great Bealings would be:

- 3 or 4 units. This will need to be agreed, together with the size and type of dwellings with the Parish Council, Local Authority, and appointed Registered Provider.

The final mix of properties will be subject to constraints of any suitable site(s) together with evidence of people registering their interest as the scheme progresses.

At the time of writing this report, due to the current financial constraints with the credit crunch, mortgage lenders are refraining from lending for shared ownership. Many Registered Social Landlords have had to convert properties from shared ownership to rent based on the current financial climate.

The decision therefore on the tenure of properties for Great Bealings would need to be agreed by both the Parish Council and the appointed Registered Social Landlord.

**Sunila Osborne, Rural Housing Enabler,  
Community Action Suffolk,  
December 2013**

GENERAL PARISH HOUSING INFORMATION

AGE

Total Household Responses: 63

163 individual responses

Bold text indicates highest response rate\*

Age	Male	Female	Total
75+ years	11	16	27
<b>60-74 years*</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>45-59 years</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>36</b>
25-44 years	10	11	21
16-24 years	11	13	24
0-15 years	9	12	21
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>163</b>

ETHNICITY

63 total household responses

163 individual responses

Bold text indicates highest response rate\*

Ethnicity	Total	%
<b>White British*</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>96.93</b>
White Irish	0	0
White Other	5	3.06
White & Black Caribbean	0	0
Other Black background	0	0
Gypsy or Traveller	0	0
Other	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>99.99</b>

HOUSEHOLD TENURE

62 total household responses

Bold text indicates highest response rate\*

Tenure Type	Number of Households	%
<b>Self/family outright*</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>67.74</b>
Self/family with mortgage	14	22.58
Private rent	5	8.06
Tied to employment	0	0
Housing Association Rent	0	0
Housing Association –S/O	0	0
Local Authority	0	0
Other	1	1.61
Second Home Owner	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>99.99</b>

PROPERTY TYPE NUMBER OF BEDROOMS

61 total household responses

Bold text indicates highest respresented property type\*

Type of House	Bedrooms	1	2	3	4+
Cottage		1	0	2	6
Terraced House		0	1	0	0
Semi Detached House		1	0	5	1
<b>Detached House*</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>21</b>
Maisonette		0	0	0	0
Flat		0	1	0	0
Detached Bungalow		0	1	6	2
Semi Detached Bungalow		0	0	0	0
Bed Sit		0	0	0	0
Sheltered		0	0	0	0
Mobile home/caravan		0	0	0	0
Specially adapted housing		0	0	0	0
Other		2	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>30</b>

NUMBER OF YEARS LIVED IN PARISH

61 total household responses

Bold text indicates highest response rate\*

	Number of Households	%
Less than 1 year	0	0
1 -3 years	2	3.27
4 – 10 years	17	27.86
<b>10 + years*</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>68.85</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>99.98</b>

OPINION

Households in favour of affordable housing

60 Household Responses

122 Multiple Choice Responses

From the HNS, 59.40% of respondents were in favour of an affordable housing scheme, showing excellent overall support, with 35% of the returns indicating that they would not support affordable housing in the parish.

	Number of Individual Households Responses
No affordable housing	21
Homes for single people with local connection	15
Homes for couples (1-2 bed) for people with local connection	28
<b>Small family homes (2-3 bed) for people with local connection*</b>	<b>30</b>
Large family (4+ bed) for people with local connection	3
Sheltered/residential for elderly people with local connection	23
Other	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>122</b>

Members of household living there because they are unable to find or afford accommodation of their own.

7 household responses

Age/Gender	Number
Female 0-15 years	0
Female 16-24 years	0
Female 25-44 years	0
Female 45-59 years	1
Female 75+ years	0
Male 0-15 years	0
Male 16-24 years	8
Male 25-44 years	1
Male 45-59 years	0
Male 60-74 years	0
Male 75+ years	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10</b>

2 households have moved out because they were unable to find or afford accommodation of their own.

Out of 63 Housing Needs Surveys (HNS) returned, 41 were happy to go on and provide the name and address for the person completing the survey. This is 62.07% of completed HNS.

CURRENT HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS  
NEED INDICATED FROM HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

Out of 63 HNS returned, 5 households responded that the current household have a need. From this 6 people in total were identified as being in need.

STATUS	Number
Single People	3
Single Parent Family	0
Couple (no children)	1
Couple (with children)	1
Siblings	0
Other	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>

5 households who identified a need provided details of when that need was likely

WHEN REQUIRED	Number
Now	0
1 - 2 Years	1
3 – 5 Years*	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>

5 households stated that they would like to stay within the parish.

Reason for need

7 households (8 individual responses) provided details as to why they were in need of affordable housing. This question was multiple choice and some respondents answered more than one.

NEED	Number of people	%
Need larger home	0	0
Need smaller home	0	0
Setting up own home	6	85.71
Employment Reasons	0	0
Insecurity of Tenure	1	14.28
Financial Reasons	0	0
Health/Mobility	0	0
Other	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>99.99</b>

Accommodation Tenure

4 households provided details on the type of tenure they would prefer.

TENURE	Number of	%
House -Rent	3	75
House - Shared Ownership	1	25
House - Local Market Sale	0	0
Bungalow - Rent	0	0
Bungalow - Shared Ownership	0	0
Bungalow - Local Market Sale	0	0
Flat - Rent	0	0
Flat - Shared Ownership	0	0
Flat - Local Market Sale	0	0
Sheltered Housing - Rent	0	0
Sheltered Housing - Shared Ownership	0	0
Sheltered Housing - Local Market Sale	0	0
Very Sheltered Housing - Rent	0	0
Very Sheltered Housing - Shared Ownership	0	0
Very Sheltered Housing - Local Market Sale	0	0
Mobile Home/Caravan	0	0
Other	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>100</b>

### Employment Status

5 households provided details of their employment status, totalling 6 people.

STATUS	Number of People in Need	%
Employed	3	50
Self Employed	1	16.66
Unemployed	0	0
Student	2	33.33
Retired	0	0
Other	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>99.99</b>

### Combined Household Salary

4 households in need provided details of their annual combined salary.

SALARY	Number	%
Below £10000	0	0
£10001 - £15000	0	0
£15001 - £20000	2	50
£20001 - £25000	2	50
£25001 - £ 30000	0	0
£30001 - £ 35000	0	0
£35001 - £40000	0	0
£40001 - £45000	0	0
£45001 - £50000	0	0
Over £50000	0	0
Currently in Full Time Education	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>100</b>

Savings

5 households in need provided details of any savings they could contribute towards any future housing.

AMOUNT	Number	%
No savings	2	40
Up to £5000	3	60
Up to £ 10000	0	0
Up to 15000	0	0
Up to £20000	0	0
More than £20000	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100</b>

Weekly Affordability

4 households in need provided details of their weekly affordability towards rent/mortgage.

AMOUNT	Number	%
Under £50	0	0
£51 - £100	2	50
£101 - £150	2	50
£151- £200	0	0
£201 - £250	0	0
More than £250	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>100</b>

Local Connection

5 households completed this question stating that they have a local connection to the parish.

Ethnicity

4 households (5 people) in need completed this question indicating White British

Local Authority Waiting List

This question was completed by 1 household who indicated a need.

From the Gateway to Homechoice local need for Great Bealings there is only 1 household registered for a 2 bed unit claiming a local connection.

Housing Association/Registered Social Landlord

This question was not completed by the households who indicated a need.

RETURNING TO OR WISHING TO LIVE IN PARISH  
NEED INDICATED FROM HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

Need

Out of 63 HNS returned, 2 of those (total of 3 people) households responded identifying a need wishing to return or live in the parish, and have indicated a local connection.

- Single people
- Single Parent Family (with or expecting children)

2 Households completed the following question

STATUS	Number
Single People	1
Single Parent Family	1
Couple (no children)	0
Couple (with children)	0
Siblings	0
Other	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2</b>

3 households who identified a need provided details of when that need was likely

WHEN REQUIRED	Number
Now	1
1 - 2 Years	0
3 – 5 Years*	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3</b>

GREAT BEALINGS HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY 2013

Reason for need

3 households provided details as to why they were in need of affordable housing.

NEED	Number of people	%
Need larger home	0	0
Need smaller home	0	0
Setting up own home	1	33.33
Employment Reasons	0	0
Insecurity of Tenure	0	0
Financial Reasons	0	0
Health/Mobility	1	33.33
Other	1	33.33
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>99.99</b>

Accommodation Tenure

1 household provided details on the type of tenure they would prefer. This is a multiple choice question

TENURE	Number of	%
House -Rent	1	11.11
House - Shared Ownership	1	11.11
House – Local Market Sale	1	11.11
Bungalow – Rent	1	11.11
Bungalow – Shared Ownership	1	11.11
Bungalow – Local Market Sale	1	11.11
Flat – Rent	1	11.11
Flat – Shared Ownership	1	11.11
Flat – Local Market Sale	1	11.11
Sheltered Housing - Rent	0	0
Sheltered Housing – Shared Ownership	0	0
Sheltered Housing – Local Market Sale	0	0
Very Sheltered Housing - Rent	0	0
Very Sheltered Housing – Shared Ownership	0	0
Very Sheltered Housing – Local Market Sale	0	0
Mobile Home/Caravan	0	0
Other	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>99.99</b>

### Next Stage

Once all the relevant parties have had an opportunity to read and consider the recommendations of this report, a meeting should be arranged to discuss the findings, and recommendations with the following parties:

- Great Bealings Parish Council and or small housing sub-group
- Housing Enabling Officer, Suffolk Coastal District Council
- Rural Housing Enabler, Sunila Osborne, Community Action Suffolk

It would be advisable for Great Bealings Parish Council to inform parishioners with a copy of the summary and the next stages.

**The summary section can be used for local newsletters and press releases; but the body of the report should only be made available to other parties in consultation with the Community Action Suffolk Rural Housing Enabler team. This is to avoid complications that can arise with 'competing' open market developers.**

Sunila Osborne  
Rural Housing Enabler  
Community Action Suffolk

December 2013

APPENDIX A

General opinions

Some comments which have been extracted direct from the Housing Needs Survey below:

60 Household Responses recorded for the following questions. These were multiple choice.

No new affordable housing

- The Village is too small to cope with additional buildings, without building on farm land.
- Not suitable location lack of - employment - public transport - facilities within village
- No requirement
- The reason we are answering in this way is because no site has yet been identified that would not come with considerable controversy and difficulties for the immediate community as well as in some cases involving waterlogged ground needing expensive piling.. if this proves otherwise they proves to be a potential site for affordable housing that does have the strong support of the immediate community then and only then we would feel otherwise. We greatly value social cohesion in our village and do not feel any decision should be taken on a future building site without the explicit support of the immediate local community most affected.
- The village does not have the supportive infrastructure to further expand - facilities school size roads
- I do not wish to see the village get any larger and certainly would be concerned about the increased traffic . Boot street is dangerous enough already

Homes for single people with a Local Connection

- No Comments received

Homes for couples (1-2 bedrooms) with a Local Connection

- No comments received

Small family homes (2-3 bedrooms) with a Local Connection

- No comments received

Large family homes (4+ bedrooms) with a Local Connection

- No comments received

Sheltered housing/residential care for the elderly with a Local Connection

- Too far from shops
- To be economically viable the size would be far too big
- If this was available it may free up homes for younger residents

Other

- Not living in area approved for affordable housing but not against it in principle
- I don't know of anyone requiring housing in the village

### Suggested Sites

Listed below are some site locations in Great Bealings which have been extracted from the Housing Needs Survey.

- Could we convert our barn?
- Suitable sites: multiple plots. Howard construction site sits opposite former social housing and they need to move.
- Land adjoining Lower St at junction with kiln lane. Land at Boot St adjoining the old rectory. land on Boot St adjoining
- Northern end of Grundsburgh Road, Great Bealings. land between Great Bealings church and the hump bridge
- No parish already too busy
- The field adjacent to the lodge road between the river (at southern hay) and the entrance to the manor farm would have minimum impact
- The neighbourhood plan will suggest one or more possible sites
- No see our response to q5. This is a crucial question. Unless suitable sites are identical that have local support (i.e. the support of the immediate community), we cannot support an affordable housing scheme for Great Bealings. At the same time it does not feel right (and indeed is a recipe for conflict) for people to suggest sites in the parish without them knowing how the local people feel about new housing in their part of the village. the categorisation of the Great Bealings as an "other" village, has been well supported in the village, and it makes possible the defining feature of our neighbourhood plan - "a village in a landscape"
- There are one or two possible sites in the village - these need careful assessment
- Defer to parish council
- We might be able to offer one living of our barn on a rented basis to a local person.

### Empty Homes

- This construction company out of the village main road would benefit all.
- Gulper, Boot St

### Redundant Buildings in Parish

Single plots would suit bungalows adjacent to Hasketon Road.  
Admirals head pub

Suffolk Coastal District Council - Housing Data

The Gateway to Home Choice (GTHC) register indicates there is 1 household claiming a local connection to Great Bealings;

1x 2 beds

Extending to the abutting parishes:

- 1 bed x 3 with priority (+ 9 in lower bands)
- 2 bed x 3 with priority (+10 in the lower bands)
- 3 bed x 1 (not in priority category)
- 4 bed x 1 (not in priority category)

Great Bealings Parish Council may want to consider those registered on the GTHC when deciding on the final number of units.

## APPENDIX D

**Average current values - Great Bealings, IP13**

1 Bedroom properties	£156,200	£108,400	£153,400
2 Bedroom properties	£185,100	£151,400	£169,700
3 Bedroom properties	£243,600	£184,600	£197,400
4 Bedroom properties	£387,000	£296,800	£355,600
5+ Bedroom properties	£546,900	£424,700	£608,100

**Notes**

**Source:** Mouseprice.com proprietary data - updated quarterly

The data above shows average current values of property in IP13 according to the number of bedrooms. For more detailed information on average prices for individual postcodes.

The data is just a rough indicator of affordability in IP13 compared with the larger area and nationally.

On average 1 bedroom properties in IP13 are more expensive than Ipswich as a whole but less expensive than the national average.

**Price: Earning ratios**

	IP13	IP	National
Average Current Value	£278,900	£198,100	£227,200
Average Earnings	£26,103	£19,929	£24,478
Price / Earnings	10.68x	9.94x	9.28x

**Notes**

Price to earnings ratios are effective measures of the relative affordability of property in a given area. The data for IP13 displayed above shows the average current value of property in IP13 (Price), divided by the average annual household income for IP13 (Earnings). The result is displayed above. For example, if the average price of property in IP13 was two hundred thousand and the average earnings were twenty thousand, the price earnings ratio would be displayed as 10.00x. In other words, the average property was worth ten times the average household income.



# LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

## Great Bealings

Closing Date: 18 October 2013



### **What is a Local Housing Needs Survey?**

A Housing Needs Survey will help the Parish Council and others decide if there is a need for a small scheme usually between 4 and 10 homes of affordable housing for local people within the Parish.

Housing Needs Surveys will identify local needs for the elderly, young and families. Adequate affordable housing provision helps to maintain a sustainable community. The lack of affordable housing in rural communities has been a serious problem for many decades, reaching crisis point in many parts of the Country.

Concern has grown over the future of Parishes, where communities have been threatened due to local families being unable to afford increasingly scarce and expensive housing. Legislation allowing 'Right to Buy' alongside restrictive planning policies have also played a part.

### **Local Housing Needs schemes**

The above concerns have led to the creation of further Local Housing Need schemes in many Parishes. Such schemes are developed in partnership with Parish Councils, Local Authorities and Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) also known as housing associations.

The homes are restricted to local people in perpetuity and cannot be sold or rented on the open market. This is bound by a legal document drawn up under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The S106 is an agreement between the Local Authority and the RSL states clearly who is eligible for the housing. Existing Local Authority or RSL schemes within a Parish will not be affected by the S106.

### **Exception Sites**

An 'exception site' is a piece of land situated outside the Parish boundary but adjoining it and where building consent would not normally be permitted. A Housing Needs Survey would need to be completed to enable Local Authority planning permission to be granted.

### **"Local connection"**

Provided the scheme is protected by a Section 106 agreement lettings will be restricted initially to people with a strong connection to the parish. Each Local Authority will have its own definition of local need and local connection but typically it would cover the following circumstances:

- connected to the Parish by birth
- resided within the Parish for a number of years
- previously lived in the Parish
- close family members reside in the Parish
- require accommodation within the Parish for work.

### **Style of Affordable Housing**

The Local Authority, District & Parish Councils would need to ensure the style and character of such housing would be in keeping with its surroundings and local building types.

### **Tenure of Affordable Housing**

Local affordable housing schemes can include different types of tenure:

- **Housing for rent**

Rent charged is substantially less than open market rents and is therefore classed as affordable for local people in need. Those eligible would need to meet Local Authority & RSL's.

- **Shared ownership**

This is a way of bridging the gap between renting and owner occupation. It gives people who cannot afford to buy a home outright the opportunity to buy a share in a new house or flat on a part rent/part buy basis. This means the purchaser buys a share of the house and pays rent on the part they do not own. At a later stage, if they wish, extra shares can be purchased up to 80% of the purchase value. This ensures that the houses will remain available for local people in perpetuity. When the initial occupant wants to move on, the RSL will buy their share back with the aid of a Homes and Communities Agency Grant and offer it to someone else with a local connection.

### **Community Action Suffolk's Rural Housing Enablers (RHE's)**

The RHE's are independent mediators helping to bring people together, facilitating Housing Needs Surveys and promoting individual schemes.

This is a real opportunity for you to help shape the future of your Parish.

**COMPLETION OF THIS SURVEY**

The head of the household should complete the answers on behalf of the entire household.

It is important that you answer as many questions as you can. With most of them you simply need to put a tick or a number in a box, (which will represent the number of people you are referring to for that question. i.e. 1=1 Person, 2=2 People etc) so this should not take very long. Space has, however, been allocated within some questions to allow you to express your views and provide more detail.

Of course, you can decline to answer any question.

The Housing Needs Survey has been divided into three parts;

**Part 1:** General information about the current household; number of people, ages, gender, type of household etc.

**IF YOU DO NOT HAVE A FUTURE AFFORDABLE HOUSING NEED, THEN YOU DO NOT NEED TO COMPLETE PARTS 2 & 3.**

**Part 2:** This part should be completed if there is a need identified for those living in the **CURRENT HOUSEHOLD ONLY.**

**Part 3:** This part should be completed if a need is identified for any other close members of the current household who would like to either **RETURN or MOVE TO THE PARISH.**

Personal details will be needed for those who have identified a need in Parts 2 & 3. This information will enable Community Action Suffolk to recommend any future housing needs for the Parish. The Housing Needs Survey does ask for current financial & employment details. All information provided will be treated with the strictest of confidence and will only be used for the purpose of identifying the type of tenure (rent or shared ownership) which would be suitable for the applicant(s).

If you would like more help completing the Housing Needs Survey, please contact one of the following:

**Suffolk Rural Housing Enabler**

Sunila Osborne      01473 345344

**A. Community Sustainability**

1. How many shops are there in this parish? (Tick one box)
- |           |                          |
|-----------|--------------------------|
| 1         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 or more | <input type="checkbox"/> |
- If none please indicate nearest available 5 Miles [Tesco - 2 miles]
2. Which of the following services or facilities are within this parish? (Tick all that apply)
- |   |                                     |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| A library   | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| A mobile library service                              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| A grocery / general store                             | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| A stand alone post office                             | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| A post office within another shop / facility          | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| A GP's surgery  | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| One or more pubs                                      | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| One or more places of worship                         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| A village hall - shared facility                      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Playing fields/tennis courts                          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Children's play area                                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| A primary school - joint provision in Little Bealings | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Pre-school service provision                          | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Car repair workshop / garage                          | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Other; - Howard Construction, Seckford Hotel          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
3. Which of the following statements best describes the public transport links this parish has to its nearest town(s). (Tick one box)
- |   |                                     |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| This parish has no public transport service   | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| There is an hourly or better weekday public transport service to the nearest town   | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| There is a two hour weekday public transport service to the nearest town            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| There is a weekday public transport service but it is less frequent than two hourly | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| There is a weekday public transport service but only on certain days                | <input type="checkbox"/>            |

GREAT BEALINGS HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY 2013

---

4. Please list active community clubs and groups: WI, Indoor bowls, Badminton Court, Snooker Club, Bealings Youth Action Theatre (BYAT), Choir

5. Does this parish have to rely on volunteer or community transport services for people needing to get to hospital and/or GP appointments?

Yes

No

**B. Housing**

6. Which of the following descriptions most closely reflect the development potential within this parish? (Tick one only)

Potential for edge of settlement development

Potential for in-fill development only

Potential limited to windfall sites

Some combination of the above

Development potential not known

7. What land within this parish has been allocated for housing in the Local Plan?

An allocation of (hectares, if none please enter 0) [0]

If an allocation has been made, how many homes are likely to be brought forward? If none, not known or unable to say then please enter 0

Anticipated number homes in total [0]

If you know how many of these are likely to be in the affordable sector please indicate here

Anticipated number of affordable homes []

8. Is this village subject to an exceptions site policy?

Yes

No

9. Is there a housing register for this parish?

Yes

No



**Great Bealings Neighbourhood Plan**  
**Landscape and Wildlife Evaluation**  
**June 2014**

Project No:	Report:	Date:
<b>01/14</b>	<b>Final</b>	<b>28 June 2014</b>
Prepared by:	Checked and updated by:	Date:
<b>Edward Jackson</b> <b>BA Oxon</b>	<b>Simone Bullion</b> <b>BSc PhD MCIEEM</b>	<b>25 November 2015</b>



**Prepared by:**

**SWT Trading Ltd**  
**Brooke House**  
**Ashbocking**  
**Ipswich**  
**Suffolk IP6 9JY**

**Prepared for:**

**Great Bealings Parish Council**  
**Neighbourhood Plan Working Group**



## Contents

<b>1 Introduction</b>	
1.1 Brief and Terms of Reference	2
1.2 Parish Location and Statistics	2
1.3 Note on references	2
<b>2. Planning and Development Context</b>	
2.1 Localism Act (2011)	3
2.2 National Planning Policy Framework	3
2.3 Suffolk Coastal District Council Development Plan	3
2.4 Suffolk's Nature Strategy	4
<b>3. Methods</b>	
2.1 Field survey	5
2.2 Desktop survey	5
2.3 Evaluation of Landscape and Wildlife Assets	6
<b>4. Evaluation of Landscape Assets</b>	
4.1 Protected Landscapes	6
4.2 Special Landscape Area (SLA)	6
4.3 Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment (LCA)	9
4.4 The Significance of SLA and LCA	13
<b>5. Evaluation of Wildlife and Ecological Assets</b>	
5.1 Protected Wildlife Sites	14
5.2 County Wildlife Sites	14
5.3 Biodiversity Action Plans	17
5.4 Suffolk Priority Habitats and Species in Great Bealings	19
5.5 Built Environment and Associated Habitats	32
5.6 Ecological Networks and Connectivity	33
5.7 The Significance of Wildlife and Ecological Assets	35
<b>6. Executive Summary for the Neighbourhood Plan</b>	37
<b>7. References</b>	
7.1 Specific text references	39
7.2 General text references	39
<b>Appendices</b>	
Appendix 1: Species referenced in the text	40

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Brief and Terms of Reference**

- SWT Trading Ltd, the wholly-owned trading company of Suffolk Wildlife Trust, was instructed by Great Bealings Parish Council on 14 January 2014 to undertake a landscape and ecological evaluation of the parish as part of the Neighbourhood Plan currently under preparation.
- Informing Suffolk Coastal District Council (SCDC) of the parish's intention to produce a Neighbourhood Plan under the provisions of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, the Parish Council stated that it wished the Plan to address, among other issues:
  - ‘How the current Special Landscape Area designation of the Lark Valley might best be preserved based on surveyed evidence carried out by us with the assistance of Suffolk Wildlife Trust’.
- SCDC confirmed on 29 October 2013 that the Civil Parish of Great Bealings, within its formal parish boundary, is the ‘Neighbourhood Area’ for the purposes of the Plan.
- This survey and evaluation seeks to provide the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group with evidence that will underpin and justify the concept of ‘special landscape quality’ and highlight the ‘ecological networks’ as rich sources of biodiversity.

### **1.2 Parish Location and Statistics**

- Great Bealings lies within Suffolk Coastal District around 3km to the south west of the market town of Woodbridge and also shares boundaries with the civil parishes of Martlesham, Little Bealings, Playford, Culpho, Grundisburgh and Hasketon.
- Data from the 2011 UK Census indicate a population of 310 people in 120 households.
- The parish consists of two discrete built-up areas centred around Lower Street and Boot Street, both lying to the west of a central north-south axis. Around ten other dwellings lie predominantly in the eastern half of the parish.
- Outside of the road network, dwellings and gardens, other buildings and utility sites there are approximately 100 plots of land given over to other land uses, with arable cropping being the most extensive followed by grassland, woodland and wet woodland.

### **1.3 Note on references**

A range of references was consulted during the preparation of this report. Where these relate to a particular comment or statement they are noted with a number in brackets e.g. [1] and cited as Text References in Section 7 below.

A number of publications and websites were also consulted more frequently and are cited in this same section as General References.

## 2. Planning and Development Context

An outline of elements of the current planning system and associated strategic documents will help to place this present evaluation in context:

### 2.1 Localism Act (2011)

The Department of Communities and Local Government promoted the Localism Act (2011). The subsequent Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations (2012) provide the statutory framework for Neighbourhood Development Plans. These allow communities to establish the general planning policies for the development and use of land in a neighbourhood. 'Neighbourhood Plans allow local people to get the right type of development for their community, but the plans must still meet the needs of the wider area'. [1]

### 2.2 National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is statutory guidance published by the Department of Communities and Local Government in March 2012 which consolidates over two dozen previously issued documents called Planning Policy Statements (PPS) and Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPG) for use in England.

Of particular relevance here is Paragraph 109, under Section 11 'Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment', which states [2]:

The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils
- recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services
- minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity
- where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures

### 2.3 Suffolk Coastal District Council Development Plan

The National Planning Policy Framework states that every local planning authority in England should have a clear, up to date Local Plan, which conforms to the framework, meets local development needs, and reflects local people's views of how they wish their community to develop.

NPPF states that the Local Plan for an area sets the rules for how the area will develop over time. The Local Plan, along with any neighbourhood plans, forms the overall development plan for the local area. Planning decisions must normally be taken in accordance with the development plan. [2].

SCDC has endorsed a Development Plan against which all planning applications and other development proposals will be assessed. The Development Plan consists of the following suite of documents:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), as described above

Suffolk Coastal District Local Plan (LP) [3].

In July 2013, SCDC adopted a revised LP setting out the planning policies, proposals and actions for the future development of the District to 2027 and beyond. This LP consists *inter alia* of:

- Core Strategy and Development Management Policies (adopted July 2013)
- Neighbourhood Plans (as developed by local communities)
- Suffolk Coastal Local Plan ‘Saved Policies’ (from previous Local plans)

The Core Strategy consists of a series of Objectives complemented by associated Strategic Policies - prefixed as ‘SP’. Within Objective 11 - Protecting and Enhancing the Physical Environment - SP14 covers Biodiversity and Geodiversity and SP15 covers Landscape and Townscape.

Linked to the Strategic Policies are Development Management policies – prefixed as DM. These offer more detailed specific approaches for different aspects or topics of development, which will be used in the determination of planning applications.

The Core Strategy also sets out a Spatial Strategy based on a Settlement Hierarchy of: Major Centre > Town > Key Service Centre > Local Service Centre > Other Village > Countryside.

- Great Bealings is cited as an ‘Other Village’, one of 27 settlements in the District ‘with few or minimal facilities’.
- Within the Spatial Strategy, Strategic Policy SP28 for ‘Other Villages’ envisages no significant new housing allocation, but allows for:
  - ‘Small scale developments within or abutting existing villages in accordance with the Community Right to Build or in line with village plans (*sic*) or other clearly locally defined needs with local support’.
  - ‘Infill housing to meet agreed and evidenced local need and where there is an aspiration in a parish plan (*sic*) to become a sustainable settlement’.

Neighbourhood Plans allow local communities to create Management Development guidelines to reflect to needs and wishes of that community.

In addition to the Core Strategy, the Council will continue to have regard to a series of ‘Saved Policies’ - prefixed AP - from previously adopted Local Plans, until such a time as these are replaced by policies in other Development Plan documents. The relevance of a particular Saved Policy will be highlighted in Section 4.1.

## 2.4 Suffolk’s Nature Strategy

Published in spring 2014, Suffolk’s Nature Strategy describes the challenges faced by and the opportunities open to our natural environment, [4]. This comprehensive and forward-looking document has been compiled by a partnership consisting of Suffolk County Council, Suffolk Wildlife Trust, RSPB and National Trust and advised by Natural England, Environment Agency and Forestry Commission. It has been drawn up in the context of the 2013 manifesto produced by Wild Anglia [5], the Local Nature Partnership with the mission ‘Embedding nature in decision-making in Norfolk and Suffolk’.

It sets out the key natural environment priorities for the county and conveys to decision makers how the wildlife and landscapes of Suffolk not only have intrinsic value, but are critically important building blocks for our own economic growth and well-being.

Within its three broad sections:

- Our Natural Environment Priorities
- A Foundation for Economic Growth
- Our Health and Wellbeing

the Strategy sets out a series of Priorities, with Actions to be followed up by the organisations and teams directly responsible for developing the strategy and Recommendations that are challenges for leaders in other sectors, including business, health and education.

The Strategy has strong relevance and linkages to the Neighbourhood Plan process. Within the Our Health and Wellbeing section, it makes direct reference to Neighbourhood and Parish Plans, stating that:

- ‘Once adopted, these plans become part of the Local Development Plan and as such become part of the statutory planning framework. These new powers provide a significant opportunity for communities to recognise, protect and improve local environmental assets.
- There is great scope for benefiting the environment, from designating green spaces to establishing ‘green corridors’ by linking open spaces and improving local watercourses. We will support communities’ writing and implementing their plans and help describe the wider context as we seek to build ecological networks across Suffolk’.

These aspirations are reflected in Recommendation 26 of the Strategy:

- ‘By 2018, all Neighbourhood Development Plans and Parish plans should ensure the natural environment is fully considered. They should maximise opportunities to conserve, enhance and link Suffolk’s green and natural spaces. We will support the development an implementation of these plans’.

Reference is also made within the Our Natural Environment Priorities section to a wide range of landscape and wildlife assets within the county and wherever appropriate its key priorities are highlighted below in relation to Great Bealings.

### **3. Methods**

#### **3.1 Field survey**

A ‘Phase 1 type’ field survey and ecological audit of the parish was undertaken on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2014, investigating and recording land use, habitat types and notable plant and animal species and taking digital images to illustrate these features. Using public highways, bridleways and footpaths it was possible to view and comment upon all but a small percentage (less than 5%) of the parish land area. The timing of the survey was optimal for assessing habitats and for recording incidental species records.

#### **3.2 Desktop survey**

A variety of existing source material was consulted including:

- Suffolk County Council website and other documents
- Suffolk Coastal District Council website and other documents
- Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership website
- Suffolk Biological Records Centre databases
- Suffolk Wildlife Trust databases
- Suffolk Hedgerow Survey – data for Great Bealings and final county report
- Suffolk Bird Atlas website
- Great Bealings parish bird records

### 3.3 Evaluation of Landscape and Wildlife Assets

The descriptions and evaluation that follow in the report draw on information collected during the field and desktop surveys. For convenience and clarity, elements concerned with the wider landscape are considered first in Section 4. These are then followed in Section 5 by wildlife elements, from protected sites through to wider ecological networks habitats.

However, these two sections should be considered as together forming a cascade of significant landscape and wildlife elements, each one flowing from and further enhancing the others.

The resulting inter-related complex of landscape and wildlife features clearly demonstrates the high natural values inherent within the parish.

At the end of each sub-section within the landscape and wildlife sections there is a summary evaluation printed in **bold blue type**. These statements are reproduced in the Executive Summary for the Neighbourhood Plan set out in Section 6. It is hoped that this Executive Summary will be integrated into the Neighbourhood Plan, with this document forming the related evidence base.

## 4. Evaluation of Landscape Assets

### 4.1 Protected Landscapes

Great Bealings lies close to the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), the boundary of which runs to the east of Woodbridge. The statutory duty to conserve and enhance natural beauty within the AONB is fully recognised within the Suffolk Coastal District Local Plan.

Additionally, Recommendation 2 of Suffolk's Nature Strategy states:

- 'The active partnerships in our protected landscapes should seek to ensure that these areas are exemplars of landscape scale conservation...'

Although not within the AONB, much of the landscape of Great Bealings has received non-statutory recognition for its own particular special qualities. The same ethos that applies within the AONB of conserving distinctive landscapes - but in this case of local importance - has much to commend it.

### 4.2 River Fynn Special Landscape Area

Landscape embraces *all that is visible when one looks across an area of land*.

The River Fynn rises c. 6km to the north west of Great Bealings. Flowing through Tuddenham St Martin, Playford and Little Bealings it then forms part of the southern boundary of Great Bealings parish. Its most significant tributary, the River Lark rises in Otley c. 6km to the north of Great Bealings. It flows south through Clopton, Grundisburgh and Great Bealings to form a confluence with the River Fynn at TM 244478. The Lark and Fynn valleys are therefore significant elements of the landscape of Great Bealings, characterising the west and south of the parish respectively.

Many local authorities in England have used Local Landscape Designations (LLDs) to protect locally important landscapes. In different authorities LLDs are variously termed 'Areas of Great Landscape Value', 'Areas of Special Landscape Importance' or here, in the case of Suffolk, 'Special Landscape Areas' (SLA).

In 1987 Suffolk County Council identified a number of broad areas of land for designation as SLAs. They considered that these areas possessed a quality of landscape that was of countywide significance. District Councils were made responsible for the precise delineation of each SLA boundary, a process that entailed a careful assessment of each using aerial photographs and site surveys.

The status of SLAs in Suffolk was reaffirmed in 2001 under the then Suffolk Structure Plan. Policy 8 of the Environment Section stated:

‘Special Landscape Areas are defined in Local Plans. They have the characteristics of one or more of the following:

- (a) River valleys which still possess traditional grazing meadows with their hedgerows, dykes and associated flora and fauna
- (b) The Brecks, including remaining heathland, former heath recently ploughed, other arable areas, river valleys and the characteristic lines and belts of Scots pine
- (c) Historic parklands and gardens which still possess significant features of their former status
- (d) Other areas of countryside where topography and natural vegetation, particularly broad-leaved woodland, combine to produce an area of special landscape quality and character

Development will not be acceptable which would have a material adverse impact on a Special Landscape Area.

The only exception to this policy will be where an overriding national or local need for development in a particular location can be demonstrated and there is a lack of acceptable alternative sites.’ [6].

Under the legislative changes of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), in September 2007 the Structure Plan ceased to be part of the Development Plan for Suffolk. However, most Districts in the county, including Suffolk Coastal, had by then created and continued to maintain SLAs as guidance for development planning.

Unlike National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), Special Landscape Area is a non-statutory conservation designation. However it was created to categorise sensitive landscapes to assist their protection from development or other man-made influences.

Reference has been made to the Saved Policies from an earlier Local Plan. Saved Policy AP 13 is retained within the current SCDC Development Plan. As may be noted the wording has its origins in the 2001 Suffolk Structure Plan, since in full this states:

- There are other areas within Suffolk with special landscape attributes, which are particularly vulnerable to change. They include some river valleys which still possess traditional grazing meadows and marshes, with their hedgerows, dykes and associated flora and fauna and Historic Parklands
- In the Suffolk Coastal District such areas include the valleys of the River Alde, Blyth, Deben, Fynn, Hundred, Mill, Minsmere, Ore and Yox, together with their tributaries. These are, therefore, designated as Special Landscape Areas

- The District Council will ensure that no development will take place which would be to the material detriment of, or materially detract from, the special landscape quality [7]

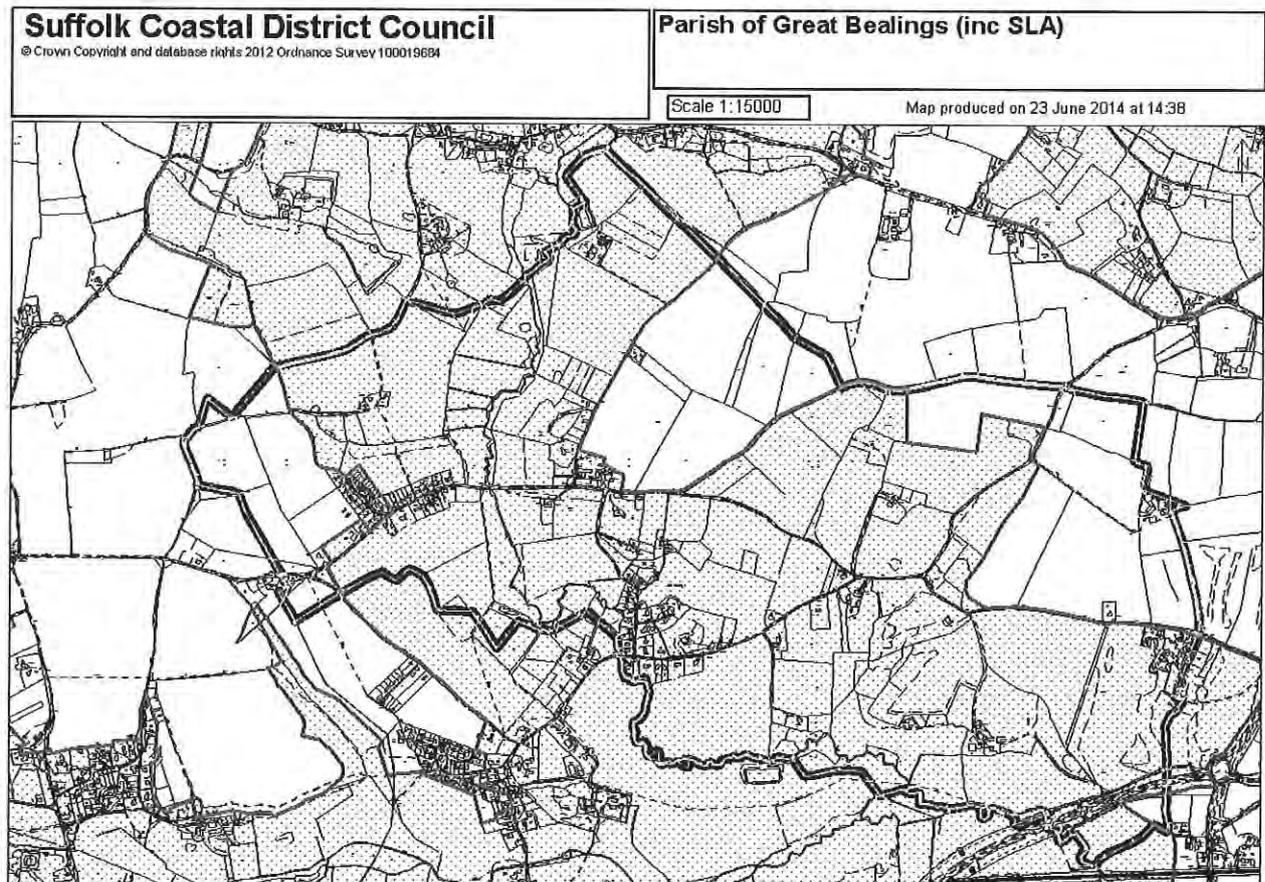
It has proved unexpectedly difficult to source a definitive rationale and citation for the River Fynn SLA. However, SCDC Planning Department documents associated with the SCDC Local Plan First Alteration (2000) indicate that SLAs were designated in a number of Suffolk river valleys because:

‘...the river valleys were considered to be most vulnerable to change from development because they were the least changed of our rural landscape types, being still managed largely by unchanged farming practices because the land is least suited to modernised farm practice.’

and

‘...they are vulnerable to change either from new development or shifts in agricultural practices. It is recognized that the landscape will continue to evolve. It is possible that, in time, that areas that have been intensively farmed could, in different circumstances, revert to acid grassland or bracken-dominated heath. Without the protection afforded by the SLA designation, it might be difficult for the Council to control some forms of development which could either prejudice the likelihood of such changes occurring or have a detrimental intrusive effect on the valley as a whole’. [8].

Figure 1 shows the extent of the Fynn Valley SLA (blue line and hatching) in relation to the Great Bealings parish boundary (red line). The two boundaries are for the most part contiguous. Within the parish only one area in the west, two in the north and a small section in the southeast are not covered by the SLA designation.



**Figure 1: Great Bealings section of the Fynn Valley Special Landscape Area (Source: Suffolk Coastal District Council)**

As noted, the designation and creation of the River Fynn SLA dates from the late 1980s and this was subsequently endorsed in a Suffolk Structure Plan, since superseded. However, it can be reasonably argued that paragraph 109 of the NPPF (Section 2.2 above) continues to give weight to Local Landscape Designations such as SLAs, as it states specifically:

The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils

The criteria supporting the creation of Suffolk SLAs have not yet been formally reviewed. The River Fynn SLA therefore remains an indication of the high value placed on landscape within Great Bealings and surrounding parishes.

**Since 1987 Suffolk County Council and Suffolk Coastal District Council have recognised the quality of landscape in and around Great Bealings through the creation and maintenance for development management purposes of the River Fynn Special Landscape Area, which extends across the majority of the parish. River valleys are considered to be most vulnerable to change from development because they were the least changed of Suffolk's rural landscape types, being still managed largely by unchanged farming practices because the land is least suited to modernised farm practice.**

**Special Landscape Areas are a Saved Policy (AP13) within the Suffolk Coastal District Plan (adopted July 2013). As such, the (District) Council will ensure that no development will take place which would be to the material detriment of, or materially detract from, the special landscape quality.**

#### **4.3 Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment**

The Special Landscape Area concept has to a great extent now been superseded by more recent assessments of 'landscape character'. These are based on more in-depth assessments than those used for the SLAs and have associated with them more precise prescriptions and guidelines in terms of development management and land management. They therefore complement, but significantly extend the concepts reflected by the River Fynn SLA.

Acting on Government guidance, in 2008 Suffolk County Council completed a project to describe landscapes throughout Suffolk in detail and assess what particular character and qualities make up the different landscape areas of the county. This is known as the Level 2 Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment (LCA), [9]. The guidance required the preparation of landscape character assessments in order to review and/or replace local landscape designations. The results of these assessments could then be used as supplementary planning guidance and to help produce landscape management guidelines.

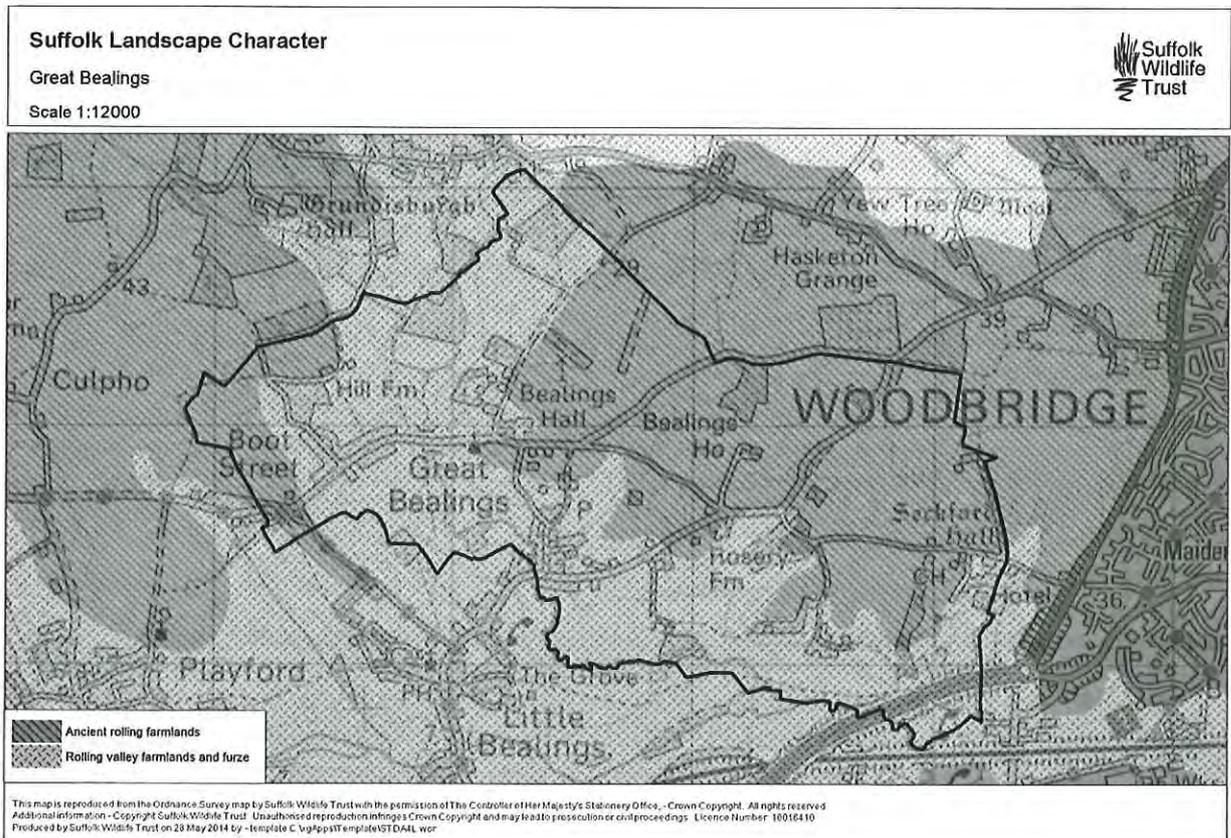
Suffolk County Council worked in partnership with the Living Landscapes Project based at Reading University, private consultants and all District and Borough Councils in Suffolk, using methodology in which discreet units of broadly homogeneous land were identified according to a set of physical and cultural characteristics. These characteristics were defined by four principal attributes: physiography, ground type, landcover and cultural pattern, which in turn were derived from six mapable datasets: relief, geology, soils, tree cover, farm type and settlement. Application of this methodology maintained a consistent approach across Suffolk.

Development Control Officers, forward planners and other staff at County and District level are now using the Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment to manage landscape change and development across the county and to produce local detailed studies as appropriate.

It will therefore be highly appropriate for the Great Bealings Neighbourhood Plan to acknowledge and make full use of both the descriptions and the land management guidelines related to the two Landscape Types that exist within the parish.

The Landscape Character Types (LCT) which cover Great Bealings parish are:

- **Rolling Valley Farmlands and Furze** (coloured ochre on Figure 2)
- **Ancient Rolling Farmlands** (coloured olive on Figure 2)



**Figure 2: Suffolk Landscape Character Types ascribed to Great Bealings (Source: Suffolk County Council)**

For each of these Landscape Character Types, Suffolk County Council has produced written Guidance involving detailed descriptions of:

- key characteristics
- sensitivity to change
- key forces for change
- development management guidelines
- land management guidelines

SCC notes highlight that the Guidance documents have been written principally to address the needs of development management. That is, to provide a summary of the forces that have been and are at work in the landscape and the key forces for change operating in the landscape at the time of writing.

However, the caveat is added that Guidance cannot be considered to be definitive for a particular site, nor is it exhaustive. Rather it is intended to give a clear indication of the issues raised and principles to

be followed when dealing with a particular type of development.

This evaluation for the Neighbourhood Plan therefore distils the essence of the information provided - as it applies to Great Bealings - as a guide for any future development here. Much of the discussion on development guidance is taken verbatim from the documents, but linkages and comments are added that make it relevant to this parish. Details of the full Guidance documents are available on the Suffolk County Council website, [10].

### **Rolling Valley Farmlands and Furze**

Key characteristics of this landscape type as they refer to Great Bealings are:

- Valleys with prominent river terraces of sandy soil
- Small areas of gorse (furze) heathland in a clayland setting
- Co-axial field systems with boundaries parallel or at right angles to a feature such as a river
- Multi-species hedgerows of shrubs (hawthorn, blackthorn, dogwood) and trees (oak, ash, field maple)
- Fragmentary cover of woodland

Above the recent alluvium close to the river channels, glacial outwash of silts, sands and gravels dating from the Anglian glaciation c 475,000 to 425,000 BP fill more or less the whole of the Lark and Fynn valleys and account for the dry sandy soils and associated heath and acid grassland on the valley sides within the parish.

Key potential changes and Development Management guidance related to this landscape type:

- It is important to maintain the existing pattern of settlement clusters on the valley sides and minimise visual intrusion on the very sensitive landscapes of the valley floor.
- Settlement expansion in a valley side landscape is likely to have a significant visual impact and adversely affect the character of the landscape, for example through highly visible new 'roofscapes'.
- New building needs to be carefully located: it must be at an appropriate scale and style as well as being integrated into the existing pattern of vegetation and settlement.
- Any new building should be close to the existing cluster of buildings and should be subordinate in size to the existing buildings. The design, including the finishes such as tiles, brickwork, mortar or wooden cladding should be appropriate for the style of buildings present.
- Exaggerated visual impacts need to be managed effectively. These can arise from vertical elements in new buildings and structures (small or large), which affect the visual amenity of valley floor and valley side and small-scale historic features such as enclosure patterns.
- New or expanded garden curtilage should always be designed to fit into the local context and respect the established pattern.
- Change of land use to horse paddocks, with associated subdivision of land and temporary boundaries can have a significant landscape impact and on the quality and condition of the grassland in more ecologically sensitive areas. Mitigation strategies in terms of design, layout and stockings rates should be employed where possible and opportunities taken to design field layout that is in keeping with the local field pattern or historic pattern of boundaries.
- Changes in cropping practices that have taken place in some parts of this landscape type (such as the use of fleece and plastic, as well as outdoor pig production) have had a significant visual effect on the landscape. The siting and style of structures subject to planning control should be appropriately conditioned to minimise their landscape impact.

- It is important that new structures are located to make the best use of existing hedges and trees both to screen the development and as a backdrop. Existing hedgelines should also be reinforced to improve the mitigation they provide.
- As the location for mineral operations is dictated by the availability of economically viable aggregates, alternative siting is not an option. However, the Suffolk County Council Minerals Core Strategy (adopted September 2008) and the associated Minerals Specific Site Allocation (adopted September 2009) identify mineral resources for exploitation up to 2021 that do not lie within the Lark or Fynn valleys.
- Although valley side landscapes have historically been a focus for settlement, any large-scale expansion should be confined to an adjacent plateau.

Land Management guidelines for this Landscape Type relevant to Great Bealings include:

- Reinforce the historic pattern, which tends to be a mix of sinuous and regular hedge boundaries
- Carry out coppice management on elm-dominated hedgerows
- Maintain and increase the stock of hedgerow trees
- Maintain the area of woodland cover: siting of any new woodland should be based on information from the Historic Landscape Characterisation and in consultation with the Suffolk Archaeological Service
- Maintain a mosaic of bare ground and varying sward heights and scrub on the small heathland sites

### **Ancient Rolling Farmlands**

Key characteristics of this landscape type as they refer to Great Bealings are:

- Rolling arable landscape, dissected widely by the river valleys, with some sinuous field boundaries in places
- Substantial open areas created by post World War II agricultural improvement
- Scattered ancient woodland parcels containing a mix of oak, lime, cherry, hazel, hornbeam, ash and holly.
- Hedges of hawthorn and elm, with oak, ash and field maple as hedgerow trees
- Dispersed and isolated settlement where it exists

These are rolling clayland landscapes, with chalky clay and loam soils derived from glacial till also dating from the Anglian glaciation. The woodland cover is largely semi-natural. Oak trees are frequently prominent, adding to the generally wooded feel of the landscape. Settlement is limited to a few landholdings over quite an extensive area. Arable production is dominated by cereals and oilseed rape, the latter making a seasonally significant visual impact.

Key potential changes and Development Management guidance related to this landscape type:

- Any settlement expansion, conversion or expansion of farmsteads, or release of land for development should reflect the local pattern. Ribbon development can have a considerable impact on the wider landscape and destroys this pattern. Any new buildings should be usually close to the existing buildings and be subordinate in size to the principle buildings.
- Larger scale agricultural buildings can have their impact mitigated by the right choice of siting, form, orientation and colour and should also relate to an existing cluster of buildings. Location in relation to existing trees should be carefully considered and any new planting should be designed to integrate the development into the character of the landscape.

- New or expanded garden curtilage should always be designed to fit into the local context and respect the established pattern.
- Change of land use to horse paddocks, with associated subdivision of land and temporary boundaries can have a significant landscape impact and on the quality and condition of the grassland in more ecologically sensitive areas. Mitigation strategies in terms of design, layout and stockings rates should be employed where possible and opportunities taken to design field layout that is in keeping with the local field pattern or historic pattern of boundaries.
- The impact of deer on woodland cover, particularly non-native species such as Roe Deer and Reeves's Muntjac, continues to increase significantly. Large scale deer-control should be supported to reduce populations to a level that allows natural woodland regeneration to take place. Individual sites may require deer fencing.

Land Management guidance for this Landscape Type as relevant to Great Bealings include:

- Reinforce the historic pattern of sinuous boundaries where they exist
- Carry out coppice management on elm-dominated hedgerows
- Maintain and increase the stock of hedgerow trees
- Maintain the extent and improve the condition of woodland cover with effective management

The Special Landscape Area concept has to a great extent now been superseded by more recent studies of 'landscape character'. The 2008 Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment carried out by Suffolk County Council used more in-depth assessments than those used for the SLAs. They therefore complement, but significantly extend the concepts implicit in the River Fynn Special Landscape Area.

Two Landscape Character areas are recognised within Great Bealings: Rolling Valley Farmland and Furze and Ancient Rolling Farmlands. As well as describing key characteristics of each landscape type, the citations describe key potential changes that could take place within them and set out a range of more detailed prescriptions in terms of Development Management and Land Management guidance.

#### **4.4 The significance of the Special Landscape Area and Landscape Character Assessment for the Neighbourhood Plan**

The following Development Management policies within the Environment Section of the SCDC Local Plan will be applied with respect to Landscape, [11]. They demonstrate the priorities the Council attaches to landscapes of local as well as national importance:

- 3.153 The district contains a variety of landscape types, all of which contribute to the quality of its environment. The Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Heritage Coast are designated as being of national importance. These areas will be protected, not only because of their visual qualities but also for their tranquility and ambience, particularly relevant in the secluded parts of the coast.
- 3.154 The district also contains other land that is designated at the county level as being important for its landscape value (river valleys and estuaries), the Special Landscape Areas (SLA) as well as landscape types identified through the Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment (LCA). Those other parts of local importance will be designated as such, being a key asset for local people and visitors.

- 3.155 LCA recognises the merits of the landscape character types that have resulted from the differences in a range of features including field and settlement patterns, biodiversity, soils, cultural heritage and local building materials. The Council considers it important that these different character areas are conserved and enhanced, but that this must be integrated with the need to accommodate change in order to address social or economic objectives and meet the needs of communities. In doing so it will be necessary to ensure that not only is harm to the environment minimised, but also that opportunities are taken to bring about improvements wherever possible. This applies whether the initiative for change is brought about by land management decisions or new development.
- 3.156 Any decision that may be taken in the longer term to either delete or amend the SLA designation, would be based on the findings of the Landscape Character Assessment and the success in implementing any guidelines generated by it. The success or otherwise of this approach will be monitored. In the meantime, the SLA boundaries will continue to apply and these will be set out in the relevant site allocations and area specific policies documents.

The descriptions and discussions around the SLA and LCA in Sections 4.1 and 4.2 suggest how the Landscape Character Assessment as a means of providing development management guidance has evolved from the Special Landscape Area concept. Comparison of the maps of both in Figures 1 and 2 shows the close match between the boundaries of the SLA and the Rolling Valley Farmlands and Furze element of the LCA (with the ochre fill). This suggests that this element is more significant to the special landscape character and overall 'ethos' of the parish than the Ancient Rolling Farmland (with the olive fill).

**Development Management guidance for any new developments within the area covered by this Neighbourhood Plan should consistently reflect the Development Management and Land Management Guidelines drawn up within the Suffolk LCA for both Landscape Character elements within the parish, but particularly the Rolling Valley Farmlands and Furze.**

## 5. Evaluation of Wildlife Assets

### 5.1 Protected Wildlife Sites

The quality of the natural environment in Suffolk is reflected by the extent of its land area with statutory protection for its wildlife. 8% of the county has national designation as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), reflecting the importance of habitats and species found here. Many of these areas are also of European or international importance, with designations under the European Habitats Directive as Special Areas for Conservation (SAC) and under the European Wild Birds Directive as Special Protection Areas (SPA), covering respectively habitats and, more specifically, birds. Large areas of the nearby estuaries and coastline are protected in this way. Although none of these designations apply within Great Bealings, but are included here to give a complete picture of the hierarchy of wildlife sites that exist county-wide.

### 5.2 County Wildlife Sites

County Wildlife Sites (CWSs) are areas known to be of county or regional importance for wildlife. They have a key role in the conservation of Suffolk's biodiversity and are important links in Suffolk's 'Living Landscape', as described on the Suffolk Wildlife Trust website, [12].

CWS designation is non-statutory, but is recognition of a site's high value for biodiversity. Suffolk currently has nearly 900 County Wildlife Sites representing approximately 5% of the county's land area.

CWSs have been identified throughout Suffolk and range from small meadows, green lanes, dykes and hedges through to much larger areas of ancient woodlands, heathland, greens, commons and marsh. Outside of areas with statutory protection (such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Local and National Nature Reserves), CWSs are therefore the most important areas for wildlife in Suffolk and can support both locally and nationally threatened wildlife species and habitats.

Many County Wildlife Sites support UK Priority Habitats and Species (see 5.3 and 5.4 below). They complement the statutory protected areas and nature reserves by helping to buffer and maintain habitat links between these sites.

It is important to note that the designation of a site as a CWS does not confer any new rights of access either to the general public or conservation organisations.

Suffolk Wildlife Trust, Suffolk County Council, Suffolk Biological Records Centre and Natural England manage the Suffolk County Wildlife Site system in partnership. This CWS system involves:

- Maintaining an up to date database of CWSs in Suffolk. Partners, local authorities and other conservation organisations have copies of the database
- Designating new CWSs, extending existing CWSs and modifying information held on existing sites when changes occur. New sites and site extensions are notified in accordance with selection criteria.
- Supplying information on wildlife interest of CWSs to landowners and other organisations whose work may affect CWSs. The importance of CWSs is recognised by local authorities in Suffolk and they have all developed policies that give CWSs some protection in line with national planning policy. If a CWS is likely to be affected by development the views of the CWS partners is normally sought as part of the consultation process.

CWSs are implicitly recognised by the NPPF as having a fundamental role to play in meeting overall national biodiversity targets. CWS are not protected by legislation, but their importance is recognised by local authorities when considering planning applications. Under current planning policy there is a presumption against granting permission for development that would have an adverse impact on a CWS.

Suffolk Wildlife Trust monitors planning applications for potential impacts on County Wildlife Sites.

It is important to note that Environmental Impact Assessments are required by Natural England when areas of uncultivated land are to undergo agricultural change, including operations such as increases in stock density, cultivation, soil spreading and new drainage work.

### **County Wildlife Sites in Great Bealings**

Currently three County Wildlife Sites are designated within the parish:

- Kiln Farm Meadow TM 236487

This 0.74 hectare site situated to the northeast of Lower Street has an interesting flora, typical of an increasingly rare habitat: wet fen meadow. Among the many plant species represented are ragged robin, red campion, white campion, common spotted orchid, southern marsh orchid, marsh marigold and great horsetail. Primrose and cowslip are also present with a wide variety of grasses and rushes, the latter found in the dampest areas.

A mown path dominated by grasses contrasts with areas of taller flowers, forming a pleasing mosaic of plant communities. The meadow is fringed with ash, elder and willow trees and it is cut late in the year to allow maximum opportunity for seed to set. The meadow is in the private ownership with management advice and assistance supplied by the Suffolk Greenways Countryside Project

- Queech Wood TM 243492

This 3.00 hectare woodland is listed in Natural England's Ancient Woodland Inventory. It is surrounded by a ditch and bank, which is typical of most ancient woods. The tree canopy is dominated by mature ash, with frequent oak and field maple and a dense scrub layer is provided by hazel, blackthorn, (dog) rose and elder. Tangles of honeysuckle and ivy on the trees are widespread.

Dog's mercury and nettle dominate the ground flora, although a number of more uncommon woodland plants are also present including wood spurge, sanicle and hairy St John's-wort. The wood is in the private ownership and is mainly used as a cover for game birds.

- Meadow Cottage Wood TM 239480

This dense 2.62 hectare deciduous wet woodland contains a mix of vegetation types including alder and willow coppice, ash woodland with oak and sweet chestnut and a scrub layer made up of hazel, blackthorn, hawthorn and elder. Exotic species such as swamp cypress are the result of plantings by previous owners.

The site is in private ownership and noted for the presence of the scarce grass bearded couch, recorded in less than ten other sites in east Suffolk. Small teasel and common bistort are two other scarce Suffolk plants found here, the latter one of only five native records in east Suffolk. Other plant species include broad-leaved willowherb, wild angelica, three-veined sandwort, opposite-leaved golden saxifrage and hogweed.

There is a ditch and bank system, paths which are mown and clearings with tall vegetation. A significant amount of fallen trees and branches of crack willow add habitat diversity to the wood.

### **County Wildlife Sites adjacent to the Great Bealings parish boundary**

The County Wildlife Sites within the parish are complemented by three others on the other side of the parish boundary, one in Martlesham and two in Hasketon.

- Seckford Hall Camp Site TM 254482 (Martlesham)

This 8.55 hectare site shares part of its western boundary with Great Bealings and is a valuable remnant of the Suffolk Sandlings heathland which once bordered the length of the coast. A mix of undulating and flatter relief supports a number of different plant communities, most notably a diverse acid grassland, with 35+ species characteristic of this habitat.

In addition to a range of uncommon heathland plants, the site supports two nationally scarce species: mossy stonecrop and suffocated clover. These occur only in 16-100 10km squares in Great Britain.

- Blunt's Wood TM 250493 (Hasketon)

This 4.04 hectare site is a remnant of a once larger ancient woodland. The ditch and bank along the southern boundary lie adjacent to the Great Bealings parish boundary. A well developed mixed deciduous hedge of oak, ash, field maple, hazel, wild cherry and hawthorn surrounds the woodland, which itself is a mixed deciduous wood with significant areas of hazel coppice, some more recent.

- Blunt's Meadow TM 244505 (Hasketon)

This 1.65 hectare site adjacent to Blunt's Wood was ploughed and reseeded in 1972-74, but escaped herbicide application and has not been heavily fertilised. As a result, the diversity of the plant community has been retained and a number of interesting species occur, including cowslip and primrose. However, of greatest interest is the presence of greater burnet-saxifrage, for which there are only five other records in east Suffolk.

The high wildlife value of many CWSs has developed through land management practices that have allowed wildlife to thrive, for example traditional and historical management such as rotational coppicing of woodland, hay cutting or grazing of grasslands. Ensuring the continuation of such appropriate management is vital to maintain the wildlife value of a site. Establishing and maintaining good working relationships with landowners and managers is therefore essential.

The CWS partnership appreciates the difficulties that achieving the conservation management of CWSs can present and is therefore happy to offer advice on management and on potential sources of funding. Free advice is available from Suffolk Wildlife Trust to CWS owners and managers and includes:

- Information on the wildlife and nature conservation interest of the site
- Advice and site visits can be made to establish the best management to maintain and enhance wildlife value.

**Great Bealings does not possess any statutory Protected Wildlife Sites, but does have three designated County Wildlife Sites within the parish boundaries - Kiln Farm Meadow, Queech Wood and Meadow Cottage Wood - and three others immediately adjacent to the parish boundary – Seckford Hall Camp Site, Blunt's Wood and Blunt's Meadow. County Wildlife Sites support habitats and species that are priorities for conservation under the Biodiversity Action Plans (see below). They complement statutory protected areas and nature reserves by helping to maintain habitat links between these sites.**

### **5.3 Biodiversity Action Plans**

The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP, 1994) was the UK Government response to the 1992 International Convention on Biological Diversity. The UK BAP listed a range of habitats, plus a number of birds and species from other taxa of conservation interest. National targets and priorities were set in order to address the particular needs of those species. The list was amended in August 2007 to include additional species and habitats to reflect concerns over continuing declines.

A change in strategic thinking followed the publication of the Convention on Biological Diversity's 'Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020' and the launch of the new EU Biodiversity Strategy (EUBS) in May 2011. As a result Government published 'Biodiversity 2020 – a strategy for England's Wildlife and Ecosystem Services', as successor to the UK BAP, [12].

Much of the work previously carried out under the UK BAP is now focused through from country level down to local level through the creation of local biodiversity strategies. However, the UK BAP lists of priority species and habitats remain important and valuable reference sources.

In addition, Section 40 of the 2006 Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act states that 'Every public body must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity'. UK priority species, listed within Section 41 of the Act, are normally taken as a good benchmark for demonstrating biodiversity duty.

In January 2014, Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership (SBP) - a consortium of over 20 organisations working for wildlife within the county - published revised statutory lists of Priority Habitats and Species occurring in Suffolk, [13] and these have been subsequently updated and amended. In a small number of cases where previously no national BAP existed, certain species are described as Suffolk Character Species to reflect their particular importance within the county.

Suffolk's Nature Strategy highlights the Suffolk Biodiversity Action Plan and its associated Priority Species and Habitats. It states that they are:

- '...embedded in local planning policies' and that 'impacts on legally protected species are a material consideration in the planning process, whilst impacts on priority species and habitats are also capable of being material considerations.'

It also refers to the National Policy Planning Framework as including:

- '...a range of requirements to conserve and protect the natural environment as well as requiring local plans to promote the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species populations. It is essential that decision makers have access to high quality ecological advice in order to meet these requirements'.

Its Recommendation 3, aimed at decision makers such as District and Parish Councils, states:

- 'In line with Biodiversity 2020...we wish to see an overall improvement in the status for our wildlife and for further degradation to have been halted. Public bodies and statutory undertakers should ensure that, in exercising their functions, they have access to and pay due regard to appropriate ecological evidence and advice so as to ensure that their duties under the relevant legislation are met'.

The following section deals with the Priority Habitats that are present in Great Bealings. In most cases the habitat descriptions include Priority Species and other notable species as supporting evidence. For the majority of species, they are only referenced if they were noted during the field survey or are recent records (post 2000) on the Suffolk Biological Records Centre database.

## 5.4 Suffolk Priority Habitats and Species in Great Bealings

Of the 24 Suffolk Priority habitats, the field survey revealed 11 to be present in Great Bealings parish.

- Lowland heath (including acid grassland)
- Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh (including dykes)
- Ancient species-rich hedgerows
- Lowland deciduous mixed woodland
- Wet woodland
- Lowland meadows
- Fens
- Wood pasture and parkland
- Arable field margins
- Rivers and streams
- Ponds

The Priority Habitats are described in more detail below to highlight the significance of these ecological assets within the parish. The order in which they are presented reflects to some extent the relative importance of each habitat in its local and regional context, but it should not be viewed as a definitive priority listing. The format is in three parts:

1. General descriptions of the habitats are taken from Local Biodiversity Action Plans, [14]. Where these have been written and endorsed by Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership, an asterisk follows the habitat title \*. In those cases where BAPs are currently being drawn up, the general description draws upon other sources and descriptions of the habitat and there is no asterisk alongside the habitat title.
2. These are followed by descriptions of the Priority Habitat as found in Great Bealings during the field survey, noting any associated Priority Species or Suffolk Character Species. Breeding birds records were noted from the Suffolk Bird Atlas 2007-11 website [15] and local records for 2012 and 2013 for Great Bealings and adjoining parishes.
3. Finally, reference is made from the Suffolk BAPs (or other sources) to those development activities that are most likely to affect the Priority Habitat as it exists in Great Bealings.

### **Lowland Heath including Acid Grassland \***

#### **1. General description of this Priority Habitat in the context of Suffolk**

Acid grassland occurs on nutrient-poor, freely-draining soils with a pH ranging from 4.0-5.5. It is found mainly in the Sandlings and Breckland areas of Suffolk, but also in other areas where sand is dominant in the geology and soils.

Acid grassland is characterised by a species-poor plant community, dominated by sheep's fescue, sheep's sorrel and common bent-grass. Other species often present in the sward include sand sedge, wavy hair-grass, tormentil and heath bedstraw. The summer-parched soils in Suffolk often support stands of acid grassland rich in both mosses and lichens. In addition, acid grassland in Suffolk is noted for a number of rare and nationally scarce spring annual plants. These include clustered clover, suffocated clover and mossy stonecrop.

Many of the invertebrates occurring in acid grassland are species that do not occur elsewhere. Ground-dwelling and burrowing invertebrates particularly favour the open acid grassland swards that typically contain bare sandy areas. Suffolk Priority bird species which are associated with acid grassland include woodlark, stone curlew and nightjar.

The loss of unimproved acid grassland mirrors the loss of other unimproved grassland types in Suffolk. Agricultural intensification, particularly the use of agrochemicals and irrigation has resulted in substantial loss of acid grassland in the county. Further losses can be attributed to an increase in urban development particularly around Ipswich. Recent assessments of the county's resource of this habitat are 820 hectares (2.7% of the national resource).

## 2. Lowland Dry Acid Grassland Priority Habitat in Great Bealings

The field survey identified two key areas of relatively unimproved acid grassland, closely associated with sandy soils on or near the top of the valley sides.

### A. Bealings Lane

The plateau and south-facing slope of the field on the northern boundary of the parish just to the west of Bealings Lane at TM 236497 has a characteristic extensive cover of sheep's sorrel and common bent (image below left). Other acid grassland herbs such as common cudweed were noted, interspersed with moss and lichen heath (image below right).

The shallow dry valley floor below this slope and the north-facing slope on the opposite side show signs of moderate to significant improvement, increasing the value of the south-facing slope. Small burrows in the sand strongly suggest that solitary bees and wasps are present on the site.



Immediately to the west of this field is an extension of this acid grassland showing mixed woodland plantation of varying ages, apparently for amenity purposes, (image right). The trees are, however, fairly well-spaced at present and shading out of the grassland is not a compromising threat, at least at this stage.



## B. Cherry Tree Farm

The rising ground and dissected small plateau with prominent relief to the north of Cherry Tree Cottage and Cherry Tree Farm form a second and slightly more extensive area of acid grassland running roughly west to east between TM 242481 and TM 248480. The habitat in the apparently unimproved core is surrounded by more improved and managed land uses including neutral grassland, arable and the southwest part of Seckford Hall Golf course (also likely to be acid grassland). The image below left shows the acid grassland in the distance and neutral/improved grassland in the foreground. Visual inspection from a distance shows the same characteristic cover of sheep's sorrel and other acid grassland species, (image below left). Mossy stonecrop (Nationally Scarce) (image below right) and hounds-tongue (declining nationally, classed as Near Threatened) were noted on tracks to the east of Cherry Tree Farm.



## 3. Activities and developments most likely to affect the Dry Acid Grassland Priority Habitat in Great Bealings

- Agricultural improvements through ploughing and reseeded, liming, irrigation, fertiliser and herbicide application
- Development for housing, recreational or infrastructure projects
- Afforestation or smaller scale woodland plantation
- Reduction in the rabbit population leading to an encroachment of open acid grassland heath with self-sown pines, birch and bracken.
- Mineral extraction for sand and gravel

### (Coastal and) Floodplain Grazing Marsh (including dykes) \*

#### 1. General description of this Priority Habitat in the context of Suffolk

This type of grassland is found on low-lying alluvium along the floodplains of rivers. It is characterised by a water table at or above ground level for some part of the year.

Grazing marsh is defined as periodically inundated pasture or meadow, with ditches to maintain the water levels. Almost all areas are grazed and some are cut for hay or silage. Sites may contain seasonal ponds with emergent swamp communities, but not extensive areas of tall fen species like reeds. However, grazing marsh may merge with fen and reed swamp communities. The mosaic of habitats within these sites provides diverse conditions, which support a wide range of plants, invertebrates, birds and animals.

These areas of flat, grazed land can be especially important for breeding, roosting and feeding waders and wildfowl. Ditches are especially rich in plants and invertebrates. Large losses of this habitat have occurred throughout the UK in the last century.

The seasonal inundation of water gives the vegetation a distinct composition, with species such as orange foxtail, creeping bent-grass, southern marsh orchid and lesser spearwort

Important components of the grazing marsh ecosystem are the ditches that often form the field boundaries. These can support a variety of marginal and aquatic plant species, including water soldier, arrowhead, water-violet and frogbit. These ditches also support a variety of animals including water vole and invertebrates such as the Norfolk hawk dragonfly.

## 2. Floodplain Grazing Marsh Priority Habitat in Great Bealings

Two sections of floodplain pasture with grazing marsh characteristics were noted in areas immediately adjacent to the course of the River Lark and further downstream around its confluence with the River Fynn. These coincide closely with the relatively recent alluvial deposits and associated silty soils that form the valley floors, identified as a pale yellow ribbon on geological maps of the area.

### A. River Lark – northern section

To the east of Hill Farm a suite of small fields runs north to south either side of the river. This is the most significant and important example of this Priority Habitat in the parish. As well as being affected by seasonal river flooding, heavy rain and subsequent runoff can create standing water in the fields, as was in evidence on the day of the field survey. Some fields are grazed (image below left), others are either to be grazed or currently growing for a store crop of hay or silage (image below right). Drainage ditches bounded by hedgerow trees and shrubs run at right angles up to the river channel from the base of the slope below Hill Farm. This co-axial field system - one of the key characteristics of the Rolling Valley Farmland and Furze Landscape Type – therefore has significant additional value as a Priority Habitat.



### B. River Lark – southern section between the two bridges and

### C. Confluence of the River Lark and River Fynn

The pastures southeast of Boot Street between the two River Fynn bridges (image left below) and those south of Cherry Tree Farm and Cherry Tree Cottage around the rivers' confluence (image right below) are subject to seasonal flooding and high water levels.

Although they all appeared from the visual survey to be improved or semi-improved grassland, they have potential for their biodiversity to be enhanced through appropriate management.



### 3. Activities and developments most likely to affect the Floodplain Grazing Marsh Priority Habitat in Great Bealings

- Agricultural intensification, including over grazing, 'over-efficient' dredging of dykes, maintenance of low water levels and spray drift from surrounding agricultural land.
- Neglect through decline in levels and extent of traditional grazing, including grazing of marginal vegetation
- Impacts of drought and ground water abstraction.
- Ecologically insensitive flood defence

### Ancient species-rich hedgerows \*

#### 1. General description of this Priority Habitat in the context of Suffolk

Hedges are boundary lines of trees and/or shrubs, sometimes associated with banks, ditches and grass verges. Those considered ancient or species-rich or both are an important reservoir of biodiversity in the farmed landscape as well as being of cultural, historical and landscape importance. Hedges act as wildlife corridors, linking habitats of high biodiversity value such as woodland and wetland, thus enabling bats, other small mammals and invertebrates to move around under cover from predators.

Ancient hedgerows, which support a greater diversity of plants and animals than subsequent hedges, may be defined as those that were in existence before the Enclosure Acts, passed between 1720 and 1840.

Species-rich hedgerows contain five or more native woody species on average in a 30 metre length. Those which contain fewer woody species, but a rich basal flora may also be considered as ancient. The Hedgerow Regulations 1997 define 'important' hedgerows as those with seven woody species, or six woody species in a 30m length, plus other defined features.

Key Priority Species in Suffolk which use hedges and associated grassy verges include: brown hare, skylark, grey partridge, song thrush, linnet, turtle dove, corn bunting, tree sparrow, bullfinch and pipistrelle *spp* bats. Hibernating reptiles and amphibians, invertebrates such as white-letter hairstreak butterfly on elm hedges, also all make use of this Priority Habitat.

## 2. Ancient and/or Species-rich Hedgerow Priority Habitat in Great Bealings

The field survey noted an extensive network of hedgerows within the parish, surrounding fields that tended to be relatively small and rarely larger than 10 hectares. Like the roadside hedgerows along Rosery Lane (image right), a significant number of the hedgerows seen had well-developed structure or were overgrown towards the base – a positive feature. Many also contained mature trees, notably oak, some of which class as veteran trees.



Great Bealings was one of the many parishes covered by the Suffolk Hedgerow Survey, 1998-2012. The 2012 report on this project [16] shows that, although access was not granted to some landholdings, out of the (conveniently) 100 hedges surveyed for woody species:

35% contained 4 species or fewer

47% contained 5, 6 or 7 species

18% contained 8 species or more

Therefore 65% of the sampled hedgerow resource within the parish can be deemed species-rich.

It must be noted that this summary is based on data collected in the early stages of the Suffolk Hedgerow Survey and that changes will have occurred since that time, both positive and negative. However, it remains broadly true that the hedgerows in the parish remain an important reservoir for wildlife.

Hedgerows are important for a number of bird Priority Species. Of these, the field survey and parish bird surveys recorded linnet, bullfinch, yellowhammer and reed bunting as breeding or possibly breeding.

The Suffolk Bird Atlas 2007-11 recorded all these species. It also recorded turtle dove in both tetrad 24J and tetrad 24P (these 4km square standard survey areas covered the majority of the parish). This rapidly declining species favours thickets and tall hedgerows with wide bases as breeding sites.

Although more catholic in its use of habitats, cuckoo was an additional Priority Species noted by all surveys and is also a species of increasing conservation concern.

## 3. Activities and developments most likely to affect the Ancient and/or Species-rich Hedgerow Priority Habitat in Great Bealings

- Removal to facilitate arable, other farming operations or other developments (though this may require consent under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997)
- Under-management and neglect of hedges leads to a reduction of their biodiversity value and structural coherence (and occasionally leads to their complete disappearance)
- Too-frequent flailing can lead to structural incoherence and – if carried out in successive years - loss of hedgerow fruit in autumn, as flowering and fruiting normally takes place on second year growth
- Mature hedges with a minimum grass strip separating them from arable land may suffer damage to tree and shrub roots through ploughing
- Fertilizer and other agro-chemical drift may degrade plant and invertebrate populations, especially where a crop extends to the hedge base
- Losses of veteran trees may not be replaced by new plantings of the same species

## **Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland \***

### **1. General description of this Priority Habitat in the context of Suffolk**

This Priority Habitat includes all broadleaved stands and mixed broadleaved and coniferous stands which have more than 80% of their cover made up of broadleaved species. It also includes patches of scrub of above 0.25 hectares forming a continuous canopy, areas of recently felled woodland and other successional types, along with the other integral features of woodland such as glades and rides.

These woodlands may be Ancient (where cover existed before c 1600) or Recent (where cover has been created since c 1600). Both these age designations may have Semi-natural cover or Plantation cover, depending on past management. Management can vary from coppice or coppice with standards to wood-pasture, high forest or minimum intervention. The latter, when found in Ancient Semi-natural woodland, contains some of the most important wildlife assemblages of any habitat.

### **2. Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland Priority Habitat in Great Bealings**

Queech Wood is already noted as a County Wildlife Site, as is Blunt's Wood on the parish boundary.

In addition the field survey noted deciduous woodland at additional sites, checked using OS 1:25,000 maps and Google Earth imagery. Starting west and moving east these are:

- southwest of Hill Farm (TM 223491)
- west of Bealings Lane (TM 223497, TM 232492 and TM 230491)
- east of Bealings Lane (TM 234493 and TM 237493)
- east of Kiln Farm Meadow (TM 237486)
- around Birds Hill Cottages (TM 244486)
- southeast of Rosery Farm (TM 243485)
- north of Cherry Tree Cottages (TM 243481)
- southwest of Blunt's Wood (TM 248491 and TM 247491)

Although not formally recognised by designations, all of these sites complement the CWS deciduous woodland within the parish.

### **3. Activities and developments most likely to affect the Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland Priority Habitat in Great Bealings**

- Further fragmentation of and within the existing woodland area
- Overgrazing and overbrowsing by expanding deer populations changes woodland structure through reduced regeneration
- Invasion by sycamore and other species considered to be non-native
- Management of woodland for game species, although there is often compatibility between this and managing for biodiversity if undertaken sensitively
- Intensification of management between woodland fragments reduces the ecological value of edge habitats and the connectivity between woodland blocks in the landscape

## Wet Woodlands \*

### 1. General description of this Priority Habitat in the context of Suffolk

Wet woodlands occur on land that has waterlogged or seasonally waterlogged soils, where the water table is correspondingly high and drainage poor. They are frequently associated with river valleys, floodplains, flushes and plateau woodlands.

Typical tree species include grey willow, alder and downy birch. The habitat supports a number of important Priority Species in Suffolk. These include mammals such as otter and pipistrelle and barbastelle bat; birds such as spotted flycatcher and song thrush and various scarce species of beetles and weevils.

### 2. Wet Woodland Priority Habitat in Great Bealings

Meadow Cottage Wood is already noted as a County Wildlife Site (image left below)

The field survey noted wet woodland at additional sites, checked using OS 1:25,000 maps and Google Earth imagery. In descending order of size these are:

- adjacent to the River Lark as it enters the parish (TM 229494)
- south of St Mary's church (TM 231485)
- southwest of Cherry Tree Cottage (TM 242480)



It is also notable that, for virtually all its course through the parish, the River Lark is fringed by a sinuous ribbon of relatively closely-spaced riverside trees and shrubs. This has very high wildlife value and contributes significantly to the ecological connectivity to be discussed below in Section 5.5. This is the case from its entry in the north of the parish through the wet woodland noted above, past the two river bridges (image right above) along to Meadow Cottage Wood and finally to its confluence with the River Fynn and beyond to where it leaves the parish in the southeast corner under the A12 main road.

### 3. Activities and developments most likely to affect the Wet Woodland Priority Habitat in Great Bealings

- Changes in the flow patterns in the land drainage systems causing changes to woodland hydrology
- Inappropriate management causing changes in the structure and flora, leading to poor regeneration and changes in the floristic diversity
- Poor water quality leading to changes in the flora and invertebrate communities
- Colonisation of the woodland by non-native species, for example Himalayan balsam

- Direct loss of the habitat through a change to other land uses
- Climate change may have a significant impact on the hydrology and biology of these woods

### Lowland Meadows \*

#### 1. General description of this Priority Habitat in the context of Suffolk

Often termed 'old meadows', these grasslands are characterised by a long history of traditional management of haymaking and have not been altered through ploughing or the use of agro-chemicals. This definition is also broad enough to include unimproved pastures where livestock grazing is the main land use.

In addition to species-rich swards of grasses and other flowering plants, unimproved hay meadows and pastures support a wide range other wildlife, including birds, small mammals and invertebrates. 96% of this BAP Habitat has been lost in Suffolk since 1939, with less than 100 hectares still remaining, though churchyard flora and fauna can mirror this habitat to some extent.

#### 2. Lowland Meadow Priority Habitat in Great Bealings

The churchyard of St Mary's Church supports a moderately rich meadow-type flora and has been the subject of a number of plant surveys, most recently one arranged through the Churchyard Survey in 2013. (Image left below, with meadow saxifrage right)



A number of other pastures were viewed during the field survey, some directly from footpaths and others from a distance through binoculars.

These appeared to be semi-improved neutral grasslands and therefore relatively poor in biodiversity terms. However, this can only be verified by visiting each field individually to assess species diversity, which was outside the scope of the brief.

#### 3. Activities and developments most likely to affect the Lowland Meadow Priority Habitat in Great Bealings

- Agricultural improvement through ploughing, drainage, reseeding, fertiliser treatment and application of herbicides
- Declining agricultural value of species-rich hay
- Changes in plant communities through inappropriate grazing/cutting regimes
- Reduction in the availability of the appropriate type and size of farm machinery for traditional hay making

- Lack of resources for long-term management of hay meadows or churchyards
- Abandonment leading to rank overgrowth and scrub encroachment

## **Fens\***

### 1. General description of this Priority Habitat in the context of Suffolk

Fen habitats are permanently waterlogged wetland habitats largely fed by springs and seeps as well as flooding by river water. In Suffolk there are two main types: valley fens and floodplain fens. Fens are one of the most botanically diverse habitats and are also rich in invertebrate species, as well as providing valuable breeding habitat for a range of bird species. However, they are also dynamic systems which generally need some sort of management to maintain the fen community and its associated species richness.

### 2. Fens Priority Habitat in Great Bealings

The small meadow represented by Kiln Farm Meadow County Wildlife Site is a good example of a wet fen meadow (see page 15 for further details).

### 3. Activities and developments that could affect the Fens Priority Habitat in Great Bealings

In the past there has been extensive reclamation of lowland fens for agriculture, by draining the land. This has resulted in many of the remaining fens being fragmented and small in size. Nutrient enrichment, arising from increased nutrient input within the water sustaining the fen also causes a reduction in species diversity. The key factor likely to impact upon the fen meadow community at Kiln Farm Meadow CWS is:

- Change in management resulting in a rise in nutrient status and/or drying out of the meadow

## **Wood Pasture and Parkland \***

### 1. General description of this Priority Habitat in the context of Suffolk

Lowland wood pastures and parkland are the products of historical land management systems and represent a vegetation structure rather than being a particular plant community. Typically, this structure is one of large open-grown or high forest trees (often pollarded) at various densities, in a matrix of grazed grassland, heathland and/or woodland floras. It can include non-native species introduced as part of a designed landscaping scheme.

Historic landscapes can provide a wealth of habitats and niches for wildlife, especially fungi, invertebrates, bats and woodland birds.

### 2. Wood Pasture and Parkland Priority Habitat in Great Bealings

A small example of Parkland habitat is present to the west and south of Bealings House (images below left and right). High forest trees include oak, Scots pine and a species of cedar, the latter known to be planted c. 1804.



### 3. Activities and developments which may affect the Wood Pasture and Parkland Priority Habitat in Great Bealings

- Reduction in structural and age diversity of woody species, including lack of replanting to replace lost mature/veteran trees or damage to young trees by cattle
- Unsympathetic tree surgery including removal of fallen deadwood or standing deadwood (unless required for safety reasons)
- Cessation of grazing by cattle or sheep leading to changes to grassland habitat

### Arable Field Margins \*

#### 1. General description of this Priority Habitat in the context of Suffolk

The land between a cereal or other arable crop and the field boundary can provide valuable habitat for a wide range of animals and plants. Up to 75% of the biodiversity within an arable field can be found in the margins, regardless of the farming practice. Changes in cropping practice and agri-environment schemes related to the EU Common Agricultural Policy all have potential to alter this habitat, either positively or negatively.

Sympathetically managed field margins can benefit a wide range of species. Where a tussocky growth is allowed to develop, many invertebrate species can thrive, including bumblebees. This also an important habitat for bats and amphibians, especially where it buffers and links to water bodies. Margins can provide nesting and feeding sites for smaller birds and mammals, which in turn support a variety of predators such as owls, kestrel and buzzard.

Key Priority Species that use arable field margins are brown hare, skylark, grey partridge, song thrush, linnets and corn bunting.

#### 2. Arable Field Margins Priority Habitat in Great Bealings

Although the field survey did not specifically visit every arable plot, a number of fields with flower-rich and/or wide margins were noted. The images left and right below are along Rosery Lane and Bealings Lane respectively.



Several of the Suffolk Priority plant species are ones associated with the arable cropping, but there are no SBRC records of any of these within the parish. However, birds associated with open farmland make use of arable crops and their margins for feeding and in some cases nesting. Skylark is a Priority Species noted during the field survey and also by the local bird surveys as being present across the parish. Barn owl, a Suffolk Character Species, has also been recorded as a breeding bird within the parish or nearby and will hunt small mammals in arable margins across a wide home range, often crossing parish boundaries.

### 3. Activities and developments that could affect the Arable Field Margins Priority Habitat in Great Bealings

Availability and changes to agri-environment schemes are the most powerful drivers of the management of arable margins for wildlife. Public records show that some landholdings in the parish are currently in Entry Level Stewardship (ELS).

As a result of recent (2014) CAP reforms, both ELS and HLS have now been replaced by Countryside Stewardship.

However in this context, it is important to note Recommendation 7 within Suffolk's Nature Strategy:

- 'We wish to see the contribution from agri-environment schemes maximised towards the multiple benefits of ecological restoration at a landscape scale, to halt further degradation of our wildlife and landscapes as set out in Biodiversity 2000...'

## Rivers

### 1. General description of this Priority Habitat in the context of Suffolk

During a 2007 national review of BAP Habitats and species by Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) it was considered appropriate to create a new BAP specifically for rivers. The criteria for a Rivers BAP were published by JNCC in July 2010 and include:

- Headwater reaches
- Presence of specific vegetation communities
- Chalk rivers
- Active shingle rivers
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest designated for riverine features or species
- Presence of priority BAP (Priority) Species or other indicator species

Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership is currently in the process of drawing up a rationale, criteria and management prescriptions for rivers in Suffolk identified as Priority Habitat.

## 2. Rivers Priority Habitat in Great Bealings

Any one of these criteria may be used to identify a Suffolk Priority river. Although the first five criteria do not apply to the River Lark or River Fynn, comparison between the list of Suffolk Priority Species and records for Great Bealings held at Suffolk Biological Records Centre shows the presence of three Priority mammal species. European otter and water vole have recently been recorded along the channel of the River Lark. Brown long-eared bat is also recorded in the parish and will most likely feed along the wooded margins of river channels.

Although there are no records of herb-type flowering plant Priority Species in the parish, there is a record native black polar (the only tree species in the Suffolk Priority list) on the River Lark to the east of Boot Street.

## 3. Activities and developments that could affect the Rivers Priority Habitat in Great Bealings

Inappropriate management of and adverse events within the river channel would include:

- Extensive dredging or channel re-alignment
- Passage of major infrastructure schemes without mitigation of effects
- Extensive removal of bankside trees
- Severe point source pollution events

## **Ponds**

### 1. General description of this Priority Habitat in the context of Suffolk

For the purposes of classifying this Priority Habitat, ponds are defined as permanent and seasonal standing water bodies up to 2 hectares in extent which meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Habitats of international importance
- Species of high conservation importance, for example ponds supporting Priority Species
- Ponds of high ecological quality, as determined by standard survey techniques

### 2. Ponds Priority Habitat in Great Bealings

Suffolk Biological Records Centre have identified seven ponds within the main area of the parish and a further two on the eastern parish boundary with Martlesham, although this may be an underestimate as the surveys did not include ponds within individual gardens.

A density of 1.6 ponds per hectare in the wider landscape means that Great Bealings is an area of relatively low pond density compared to other parts of the county. In other Landscape Character areas such as Plateau Claylands, pond densities may be more than ten times higher.

It was not possible to visit these ponds individually during the field survey, but reference to Google Earth imaging suggests that the majority still exist. There may also be an additional network of garden ponds, which it was not possible to identify during the field survey.

### 3. Activities and developments that could affect the Ponds Priority Habitat in Great Bealings

Ponds are dynamic systems, being both lost and created over time. However, loss or degradation of ponds - even if they are at low densities within a landscape network - may lead to a reduced diversity of wildlife as ponds become more isolated from one another, compromising species that may rely on a network of ponds for their survival. Examples of how such changes may occur include:

- Complete infilling due to loss of economic value or new development
- Loss of terrestrial buffer zones in areas of intensive land use
- Diffuse or point source pollution from nutrients or other chemicals
- Inadvertent or deliberate introduction of non-native species such as New Zealand pygmyweed (*aka* Australian swamp stonecrop), least duckweed or domesticated fish
- Neglect and/or lack of management resulting in heavy shading and drying out

It should be noted that some apparently neglected ponds and many ephemeral ponds are of great interest for biodiversity and that a pond survey based on a standard procedure can do much to inform management decisions.

**Great Bealings is richly endowed with Priority Habitats. Eleven Priority Habitats have been identified: lowland heath including acid grassland, floodplain grazing marsh, ancient species-rich hedgerows, lowland mixed deciduous woodland, wet woodland, lowland meadows, fens, wood pasture and parkland, arable field margins, rivers and ponds.**

**Within these habitats a number of Suffolk Priority Species and Character Species are present which complement and underline their conservation value: native black poplar, common toad, cuckoo, barn owl, swift, skylark, dunnock, song thrush, starling, linnet, bullfinch, reed bunting and yellowhammer.**

**Suffolk's Nature Strategy highlights the importance of the Suffolk Biodiversity Action Plan and its associated Priority Species and Habitats. It states that they are '...embedded in local planning policies' and that 'impacts on legally protected species are a material consideration in the planning process, whilst impacts on priority species and habitats are also capable of being material considerations.'**

**The Neighbourhood Plan recognises the significance for Suffolk's wildlife of both the number and the extent of Priority Habitats within the parish. Landowners and land managers of all types are encouraged to become conversant with the relevant Priority Habitat and Species citations. Links to the relevant pages on the Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership website are available on the parish website. Landowners and managers are also encouraged to seek management advice wherever appropriate to ensure the wildlife interest of these Priority Habitats can be both maintained and enhanced as ecological assets.**

## **5.5 Built Environment and Associated Habitats**

### 1. General description of this habitat in the context of Suffolk

This habitat refers broadly to the wide range of structures, materials and microhabitats found in the built environment, including (though not exclusively) farm buildings, houses, gardens, allotments and waste land. These built-up areas, gardens and associated spaces can form a significant proportion of the land use within a settlement, but still provide a wide range of semi-natural habitats with significant

biodiversity value. On a more intimate scale, buildings mimic and provide an equivalent to natural cliff faces and gardens can provide the equivalent to the woodland, scrub, hedgerows, species-rich meadows, ponds and streams that are found in the wider countryside. All provide opportunities and in some case refuges for a wide range of species to complete their life cycles.

The conservation importance of the built environment and its associated habitats also lies as much in the opportunities they provide for people to have close contact with wildlife as in the protection of common and scarcer species. Becoming familiar with the wildlife in a garden often stimulates interest in species and habitats within the wider countryside.

## 2. Built Environment Habitat in Great Bealings

The general description underlines the importance for wildlife of the buildings and gardens within the parish. Aerial images on Google Earth show just how interconnected the houses and gardens are both around and between the main settlement nodes of Lower Street and Boot Street.

Within these built up area, as well as a wide variety of more common bird species, the Suffolk Bird Atlas 2007-2011 and both the field survey and parish bird survey all recorded song thrush, starling and dunnock (all BAP Species) as breeding birds, plus barn owl and swift (Suffolk Character Species). The Atlas also noted spotted flycatcher (another BAP Species) in the tetrad covering the eastern half of the parish. Common toad is an amphibian BAP Species that appears in SBRC records and is likely to be still present.

## 3. Activities and developments that could affect this habitat in Great Bealings

Rather than note adverse actions, there is a wide range of information and websites generally available on wildlife gardening. Some of the positive actions than individual gardeners can consider include:

- Creating ponds and mini wildflower meadows
- Composting and creating deadwood areas
- Harvesting rainwater
- Avoiding garden chemicals

## **5.6 Ecological Networks and Connectivity**

### The significance of ecological networks and connectivity

Maintaining and improving connectivity between habitats is important in ensuring the longer-term survival of biodiversity in an increasingly fragmented landscape and with a changing climate.

An ecological network is the basic natural infrastructure that enables biodiversity assets (both habitats and species) to become re-established if damaged or in decline and become resilient to the impacts of climate change. Integrated with the natural cycling of water, soil and nutrients, biodiversity provides what are increasingly recognised as vital 'ecosystem services'. These services are not only of intrinsic of social and economic value, but will create social and economic problems if they fall too far into deficit.

The major components of an ecological network can be identified as:

- Core Areas: existing areas/features/resources of importance for biodiversity
- Corridors: existing linear features providing structural connectivity between Core Areas and into the wider landscape

- Stepping Stones: existing habitat patches providing functional connectivity between Core Areas and into the wider landscape
- Restoration Areas: areas/features/resources with the potential to become future Core Areas, or to improve connectivity, if they are enhanced or restored
- Buffer zones: can be included around all these elements to lessen the likelihood of direct or indirect impacts upon them

As already noted the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that local authorities should take a strategic approach to biodiversity. It includes a range of requirements to conserve and enhance the natural environment, among them requiring Local Plans (and by association their integrated Neighbourhood Plans) to: ‘...promote the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species populations. It is essential that decision makers have access to high quality ecological advice in order to meet these requirements’.

In addition, Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystems services also features a number of Priority Actions, including to 'establish more coherent and resilient ecological networks on land that safeguards ecosystem services for the benefit of wildlife and people'.

### Ecological networks in Great Bealings

Compared to many other Suffolk parishes Great Bealings has a high quality ecological network and good levels of connectivity. This is in large part due to the influence of the River Lark and River Fynn, contrasts in relief, geology and soils and the relatively small and well-connected field enclosures. These assets can be seen well from the air, with a patchwork of interconnected enclosures, showing variety of shape, form, texture and vertical structure.

- Core Areas are represented by the significant coverage of different Priority Habitats across the parish
- Corridors are provided by the rich network of hedgerows, arable margins and riverine features
- Stepping Stones are represented by the smaller areas of deciduous woodland and the ponds
- Restoration Areas with the potential for enhancement into Core Areas lie alongside, for example, existing acid grassland, floodplain grazing marsh and wet woodland Priority Habitats

In some cases, several Priority Habitats lie adjacent to each other, enhancing the biodiversity value of the network. For example the Rivers are associated with Floodplain Grazing Marsh and Wet Woodland. Linked habitats such as these are also likely to be important in allowing wildlife to adapt to the effects of climate change.



**Figure 3: Aerial view of landscape centred on Great Bealings**



This photograph showing the view over land to the south of Cherry Tree Farm also demonstrates how a valuable mosaic of habitats can be found adjacent to arable crops. The bright green crop in the distance centre right, has an extensive arable margin running down to the riverine woodland on the north bank of the River Fynn.

Examples of similar mosaics can be found elsewhere in the parish and all support the complexity of these ecological networks.

Compared to many other Suffolk parishes, Great Bealings displays a high quality ecological network and good degrees of connectivity. The Neighbourhood Plan recognises the value of the ecosystem services this high status offers to the community. Careful consideration of appropriate Development Management options will help to support and promote actions that maintain and enhance these values.

### 5.7 The significance of wildlife and ecological assets for the Neighbourhood Plan

Development Management policy DM27 and its associated guidance within the Environment Section of the SCDC Local Plan will be applied with respect to Biodiversity (and Geodiversity), [10]. This demonstrates the priorities the Council attaches to wildlife assets of local as well as national importance:

The policy states that: 'All development proposals should

- protect the biodiversity and geodiversity value of land and buildings and minimise fragmentation of habitats
- maximise opportunities for restoration, enhancement and connection of natural habitats
- incorporate beneficial biodiversity conservation features where appropriate'

Relevant guidance includes:

- 5.73 In order to protect nature conservation, it will also be important to protect habitats outside designated sites and to protect particular species, such as those which are rare or protected. Suffolk Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats and Species as defined by Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership, and other species protected by law will be protected from harmful development. Where there is reason to suspect the presence of nature conservation interests, applications for development should be accompanied by a survey and assessment of their value, in accordance with local biodiversity validation requirements. If present, the proposal must be sensitive to, and make provision for, their needs.

It is therefore clear that SCDC Local Plan policy and guidance is in place to ensure that the high quality wildlife and ecological assets of Great Bealings can be fully taken into account during any development management process.

**The Neighbourhood Plan recognises that SCDC Local Plan policy and guidance is in place to ensure that the high quality wildlife and ecological assets of Great Bealings can be fully taken into account during any development management process. Any individual proposals for development should have regard to these assets and should be accompanied by appropriate surveys and assessment of their value, drawing on the services of professional conservation advisors wherever appropriate.**

## 6. Executive Summary for the Neighbourhood Plan

The following paragraphs bring together the summary statements from each section of this evaluation. It is hoped that they will be incorporated into the Neighbourhood Plan as statements of Development Management priorities with respect to landscape and wildlife.

### Landscape Assets

- Since 1987 Suffolk County Council and Suffolk Coastal District Council have recognised the quality of landscape in and around Great Bealings through the creation and maintenance for development management purposes of the River Fynn Special Landscape Area, which extends across the majority of the parish. River valleys are considered to be most vulnerable to change from development because they were the least changed of Suffolk's rural landscape types, being still managed largely by unchanged farming practices because the land is least suited to modernised farm practice.
- Special Landscape Areas are a Saved Policy (AP13) within the Suffolk Coastal District Plan (adopted July 2013). As such, the (District) Council will ensure that no development will take place which would be to the material detriment of, or materially detract from, the special landscape quality.
- The Special Landscape Area concept has to a great extent now been superseded by more recent studies of 'landscape character'. The 2008 Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment carried out by Suffolk County Council used more in-depth assessments than those used for the SLAs. They therefore complement, but significantly extend the concepts implicit in the River Fynn Special Landscape Area.
- Two Landscape Character areas are recognised within Great Bealings: Rolling Valley Farmland and Furze and Ancient Rolling Farmlands. As well as describing key characteristics of each landscape type, the citations describe key potential changes that could take place within them and set out a range of more detailed prescriptions in terms of Development Management and Land Management guidance.
- Development Management guidance for any new developments within the area covered by this Neighbourhood Plan should consistently reflect the Development Management and Land Management Guidelines drawn up within the Suffolk LCA for both Landscape Character elements within the parish, but particularly the Rolling Valley Farmlands and Furze.

### Wildlife Assets

- Great Bealings does not possess any statutory Protected Wildlife Sites, but does have three designated County Wildlife Sites within the parish boundaries - Kiln Farm Meadow, Queech Wood and Meadow Cottage Wood - and three others immediately adjacent to the parish boundary – Seckford Hall Camp Site, Blunt's Wood and Blunt's Meadow. County Wildlife Sites support habitats and species that are priorities for conservation. They complement statutory protected areas and nature reserves by helping to maintain habitat links between these sites.

- Great Bealings is richly endowed with Priority Habitats and eleven Priority Habitats have been identified: lowland heath including acid grassland, floodplain grazing marsh, hedgerows, lowland mixed deciduous woodland, wet woodland, lowland meadows, wood pasture and parkland, arable field margins, rivers and ponds.
- Within these habitats a number of Suffolk Priority Species and Character Species are present which complement and underline their conservation value: native black poplar, common toad, cuckoo, barn owl, swift, skylark, dunnock, song thrush, starling, linnets, bullfinch, reed bunting and yellowhammer.
- Suffolk's Nature Strategy highlights the importance of the Suffolk Biodiversity Action Plan and its associated Priority Species and Habitats. It states that they are '...embedded in local planning policies' and that 'impacts on legally protected species are a material consideration in the planning process, whilst impacts on priority species and habitats are also capable of being material considerations.'
- The Neighbourhood Plan recognises the significance for Suffolk's wildlife of both the number and the extent of Priority Habitats within the parish. Landowners and land managers of all types are encouraged to become conversant with the relevant Priority Habitat and Species citations. Links to the relevant pages on the Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership website are available on the parish website. Landowners and managers are also encouraged to seek management advice wherever appropriate to ensure the wildlife interest of these Priority Habitats can be both maintained and enhanced as ecological assets.
- Compared to many other Suffolk parishes, Great Bealings displays a high quality ecological network and good degrees of connectivity. The Neighbourhood Plan recognises the value of the ecosystem services this high status offers to the community. Careful consideration of appropriate Development Management options will help to support and promote actions that maintain and enhance these values.

## 7. References

### 7.1 Specific text references

1. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/contents/enacted> accessed May 2014
2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2> accessed May 2014
3. <http://www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourdistrict/planning/review> accessed May 2014
4. <http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/assets/suffolk.gov.uk/Environment%20and%20Transport/Environment/Suffolk%20Nature%20Strategy%20brochure.pdf> accessed May 2014
5. [http://www.wildanglia.org/?page\\_id=268](http://www.wildanglia.org/?page_id=268) accessed May 2014
6. <http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/environment-and-transport/planning-and-buildings/key-documents-and-archive/structure-plan> accessed June 2014
7. <http://www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/assets/Documents/District/Planning-policy/Local-Plan/LocalPlanSavedPoliciesText.pdf> accessed May 2014
8. Inspector's report into the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan first alteration Volume 2 (issued 4/2/2000), paragraphs 160 – 165, Suffolk Coastal District Council
9. <http://www.suffolklandscape.org.uk> accessed June 2014
10. SCLA detailed descriptions
11. <http://www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/assets/Documents/LDF/SuffolkCoastalDistrictLocalPlanJuly2013.pdf> accessed June 2014
12. <http://www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org/living-landscapes> accessed June 2014
13. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/biodiversity-2020-a-strategy-for-england-s-wildlife-and-ecosystem-services> accessed June 2014
14. <http://www.suffolkbiodiversity.org/biodiversity-action-plans.aspx> accessed June 2014
15. [http://suffolkbrc.org.uk/public\\_html/sites/default/files/Bird%20Atlas%20New/SuffBirdAtlasTetrad.html#birdTables](http://suffolkbrc.org.uk/public_html/sites/default/files/Bird%20Atlas%20New/SuffBirdAtlasTetrad.html#birdTables) accessed June 2014
16. Suffolk Hedgerow Survey 1998-2012, Guy Ackers, Suffolk Coastal District Council Greenprint Forum, 2012

### 7.2 General references

A Flora of Suffolk: Martin Sanford, 2010

Suffolk Biological Records Centre: data records for Great Bealings

Birds of Great and Little Bealings and adjoining parishes, 2012 & 2013 *pers. records.*

## Appendix 1:

### Species referenced in the main text

#### Plants

Alder	<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>
Ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>
Arrowhead	<i>Sagittaria sagittifolia</i>
Bearded couch	<i>Elymus caninus</i>
Blackthorn	<i>Prunus spinosa</i>
Broad-leaved willowherb	<i>Epilobium montanum</i>
Cedar <i>sp</i>	<i>Cedrus sp</i>
Clustered clover	<i>Trifolium glomeratum</i>
Common bent-grass	<i>Agrostis capillaris</i>
Common bistort	<i>Persicaria bistorta</i>
Common cudweed	<i>Filago vulgaris</i>
Common nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>
Common spotted orchid	<i>Dactylorhiza fuchsii</i>
Cowslip	<i>Primula veris</i>
Crack willow	<i>Salix fragilis</i>
Creeping bent-grass	<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>
Dog rose	<i>Rosa canina</i>
Dog's mercury	<i>Mercurialis perennis</i>
Downy birch	<i>Betula pubescens</i>
Elder	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>
English elm	<i>Ulmus procera</i>
Field maple	<i>Acer campestre</i>
Frogbit	<i>Hydrocharis morsus-ranae</i>
Great horsetail	<i>Equisetum telmateia</i>
Greater burnet-saxifrage	<i>Pimpinella major</i>
Grey willow	<i>Salix cinerea</i>
Hairy St John's-wort	<i>Hypericum hirsutum</i>
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>
Hazel	<i>Corylus avellana</i>
Heath bedstraw	<i>Galium saxatile</i>
Himalayan (Indian) balsam	<i>Impatiens glandulifera</i>
Hogweed	<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>
Honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>
Hounds-tongue	<i>Cynoglossum officinale</i>
Ivy	<i>Hedera helix</i>
Least duckweed	<i>Lemna minuta</i>
Lesser spearwort	<i>Ranunculus flammula</i>
Marsh marigold	<i>Caltha palustris</i>
Meadow saxifrage	<i>Saxifraga granulata</i>
Mossy stonecrop	<i>Crassula tilaea</i>
Native (or Wild) Black Poplar	<i>Populus nigra ssp. betulifolia</i>
New Zealand pygmyweed	<i>Crassula helmsii</i>
Opposite-ldd golden saxifrage	<i>Chrysosplenium oppositifolium</i>
Orange foxtail	<i>Alepocurus aequalis</i>
Pedunculate oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>
Primrose	<i>Primula vulgaris</i>
Red campion	<i>Silene dioica</i>

Ragged robin	<i>Lychnis flos-cuculi</i>
Sand sedge	<i>Carex arenaria</i>
Sanicle	<i>Sanicula europaea</i>
Sheep's fescue	<i>Festuca ovina</i>
Sheep's sorrel	<i>Rumex acetosella</i>
Small teasel	<i>Dipsacus pilosus</i>
Southern marsh orchid	<i>Dactylorhiza praetermissa</i>
Suffocated clover	<i>Trifolium suffocatum</i>
Swamp cypress	<i>Taxodium distichum</i>
Sweet chestnut	<i>Castanea sativa</i>
Sycamore	<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>
Three-veined sandwort	<i>Moebria trinervia</i>
Tormentil	<i>Potentilla erecta</i>
Water soldier	<i>Stratiotes aloides</i>
Water-violet	<i>Hottonia palustris</i>
Wavy hair-grass	<i>Deschampsia flexuosa</i>
White campion	<i>Silene latifolia</i>
Wild angelica	<i>Angelica sylvestris</i>
Wild cherry	<i>Prunus avium</i>
Wood spurge	<i>Euphorbia amygdaloides</i>

### **Invertebrates**

Norfolk hawker	<i>Aeshna isosceles</i>
White-letter hairstreak	<i>Satyrion w-album</i>

### **Amphibians**

Common Toad	<i>Bufo bufo</i>
-------------	------------------

### **Birds**

Grey partridge	<i>Perdix perdix</i>
Common buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>
Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>
Stone curlew	<i>Burhinus oedipnemus</i>
Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>
Turtle dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>
Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>
Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>
Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>
Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>
Woodlark	<i>Lullula arborea</i>
Duncock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>
Spotted flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>
Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>
Tree sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>
Linnet	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>
Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>
Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>
Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>
Corn bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>

**Mammals**

Water Vole	<i>Arvicola terrestris</i>
Brown hare	<i>Lepus europaeus</i>
Soprano Pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>
Brown Long-eared Bat	<i>Plecotus auritus</i>
Barbastelle	<i>Barbastella barbastellus</i>
European Otter	<i>Lutra lutra</i>
Roe deer	<i>Capreolus capriolus</i>
Chinese Muntjac deer	<i>Muntiacus reevesi</i>