

# Cliddesden Neighbourhood Plan

## VALUED LANDSCAPE BACKGROUND PAPER

July 2023

To Preserve the Character of the Valued Landscape in the Parish

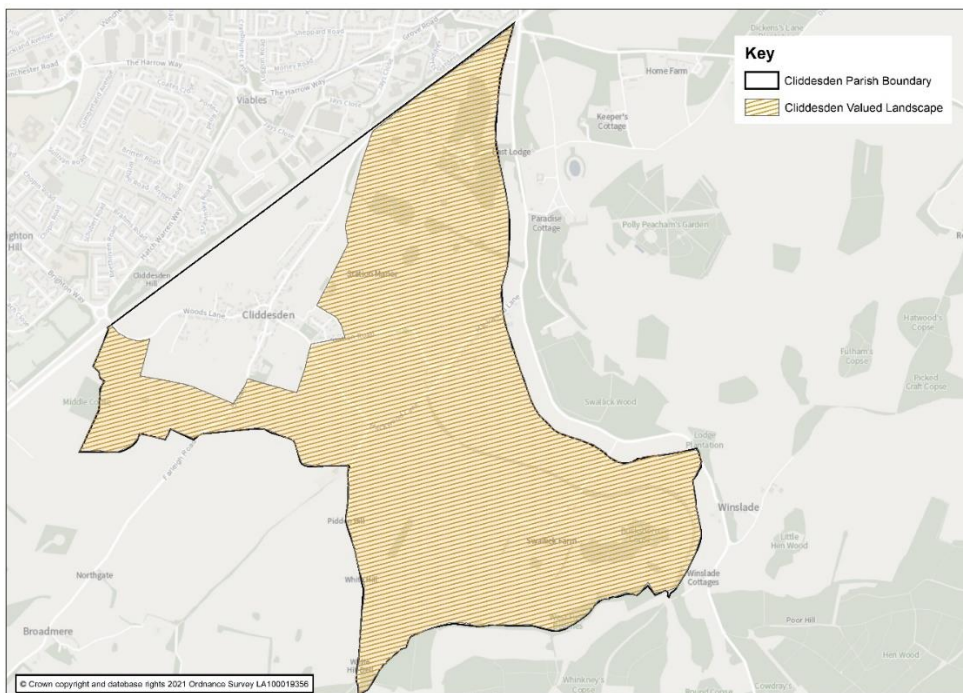


Fig 1: Map of Valued Landscape area shown shaded

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

A policy to preserve the character of the Valued Landscape in the parish.

The area shown in Fig 1 has been defined as a Valued Landscape, based on input from multiple sources listed in this evidence document. In particular: the NPPF, the CPRE document, the Basingstoke Tadley and Bramley Landscape Capacity study 2008 (BA18,BA19 and BA20), the Hampshire Integrated Character Assessment (8B, 8C), and Basingstoke and Deane Landscape Character Assessment (LCA16) have contributed to the area defined.

Paragraph 170 of the NPPF states:

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

- *protecting and enhancing **valued landscapes**, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status **or identified quality in the development plan**);*

**The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)** provides the following expansion on the NPPF:

*“How can planning policies conserve and enhance landscapes?”*

*The National Planning Policy Framework is clear that plans should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and that strategic policies should provide for the conservation and enhancement of landscapes. This can include nationally and locally-designated landscapes but also the wider countryside.*

*Where landscapes have a particular local value, it is important for policies to identify their special characteristics and be supported by proportionate evidence. Policies may set out criteria against which proposals for development affecting these areas will be assessed. Plans can also include policies to avoid adverse impacts on landscapes and to set out necessary mitigation measures, such as appropriate design principles and visual screening, where necessary. The cumulative impacts of development on the landscape need to be considered carefully.” (Paragraph: 036)*

The PPG goes on to state that in order to assess the character of landscapes to determine whether they are ‘valued’ that Landscape Character Assessments can be prepared and used alongside Natural England’s National Character Area profiles.



This view from Farleigh Hill in the south of the village demonstrates the clear difference in the landscape that commences as you enter the parish of Cliddesden - a dramatic contrast to the urban area of Basingstoke to the north. The parish consultations below prove the strong local desire to safeguard the landscape and the importance of maintaining that unique character.

As one arrives in Cliddesden one is struck by the sense of place. The air of rural tranquillity continues throughout the parish with homes nestled in a linear style along its lanes with tantalising views of the surrounding countryside in between the buildings. The air is fresh as one walks or cycles along the ancient lanes lined with hedges and trees that abound with wildlife and border fine agricultural land. Cliddesden has been a rural farming community since long before the arrival of the Normans almost a thousand years ago.

This makes it a special place to those who live, visit and work here, in stark contrast to the conurbation of Basingstoke. Many people from Basingstoke and beyond have discovered the value of the area and its landscape, as evidenced by the startling increase in the number of walkers, cyclists and horse-riders enjoying the countryside as part of their physical exercise and mental health wellbeing in the recent covid pandemic of 2020/2021.

The amenity value of the local countryside is something not just valued by residents of the village but also enjoyed by the wider community as evidenced by walkers and cyclists from Basingstoke. As a specific example, the annual Basingstoke half marathon passes through Cliddesden and has done for many years.

Even though it is in the neighbouring parish, the proximity of the Hackwood Park Estate to the north of the parish, with its historic house, spacious parkland, ancient woodland and long heritage has long been a celebrated feature in the Cliddesden landscape. It is extremely important to maintain the character of the landscape of Cliddesden to avoid any negative impact on the historical setting of Hackwood park.

Much of the surrounding countryside is part of the Portsmouth Estate, another historic property with vast agricultural acreage incorporating ancient woodlands and trackways since the mid 15c century. This landscape contains valuable existing spacious areas for nature's recovery with space for wildlife to move around using the many wildlife corridors.



**Fig 2 Map of Cliddesden Parish Boundary showing how the whole parish is comprised of green fields allowing for clear views of the landscape**

## The landscape has historical literary significance



**Thomas Hardy**

In 1895, Thomas Hardy referred to Basingstoke area as "Stoke Barehills" in *Jude the Obscure*, alluding to the sweeping landscape, "amid the open, chalk-soiled cornlands".



**Statue of Jane Austen**

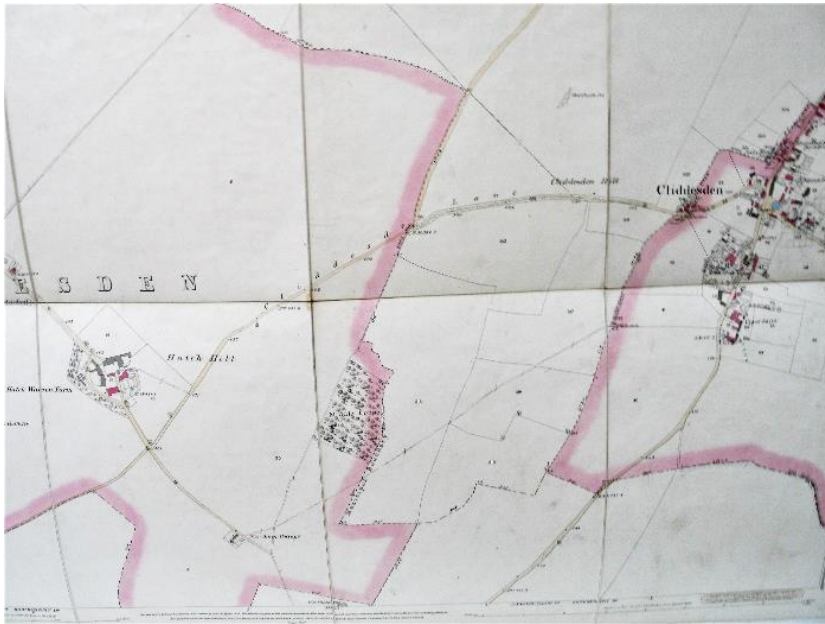
The area around Basingstoke is known as "*Jane Austen Country*", Miss Austen being one of Britain's most celebrated novelists. Born in Steventon just a few miles away where she lived until the age of 25, she would have been familiar with the area and may well have passed through Cliddesden during her youth.



**Commemorative bench**

Cliddesden Railway Station was chosen as the location for two films, "*The Wreckers*" (1928) and "*Oh Mr Porter!*" (1937). It was renamed "Buggleskelly" in the films and although virtually nothing remains since the railway was dismantled the area is still visited regularly by members of The Will Hay Appreciation Society who donated a commemorative bench to Cliddesden Village Hall. The Railway was finally closed in 1936 and little remains of the railway, other than a clearly defined track, bordered by hedgerows and trees. This has become a distinctive and not unattractive feature in the landscape as it traverses the parish, North to South and then follows the contours of the land around Swallick farm.

**Cliddesden historical maps of 1872 illustrating the rural landscape surrounding the village**



**Fig 3a Cliddesden Village 1872**



**Fig 3b Swallick Wood and Hackwood Park 1872**



Fig 3c Swallick Farm and White Hill 1872



Fig 4: National Character Areas of Hampshire

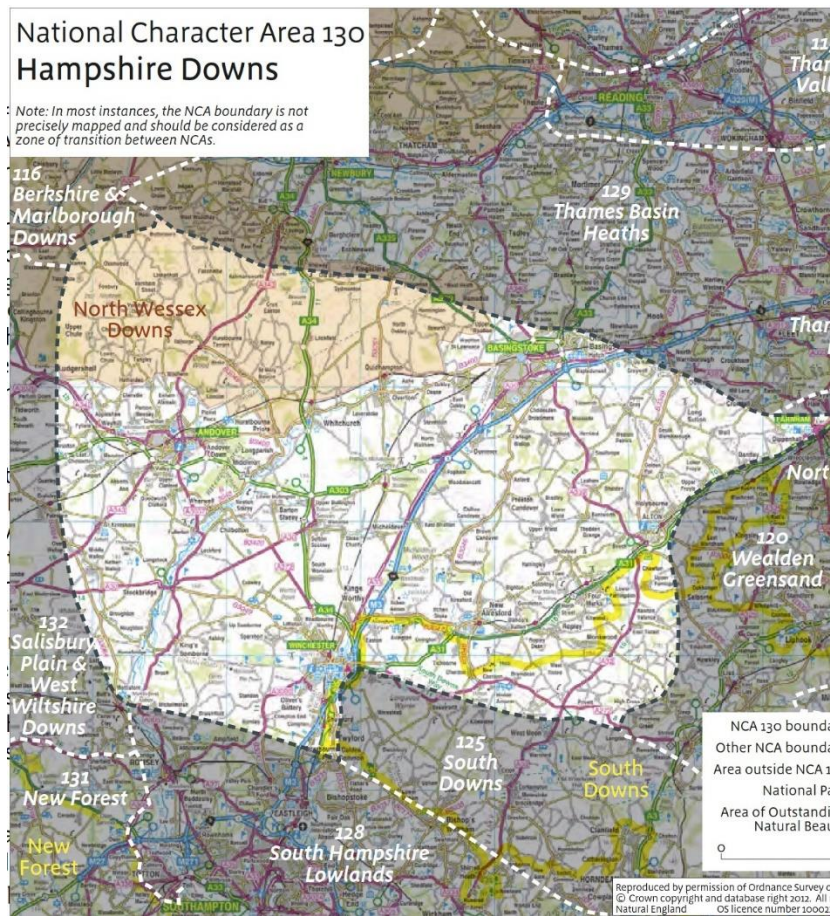


Fig 5: Hampshire Downs

Cliddesden is the gateway to the North Hampshire Downs (see Figs 4 & 5). The Downs have been designated a National Character Area (NCA 130) by Natural England. The northern boundary of the Hampshire Downs follows a line from just north of Walbury Hill in Berkshire to Basingstoke and Farnham. This northern edge of the Hampshire Downs forms a ridge and dramatic escarpment rising to over 290 metres, overlooking the Thames Basin.

Cliddesden parish shares many of the same features and characteristics as the villages of Nutley, Axford, and Preston Candover, that lie in a line southwards down the Candover valley.

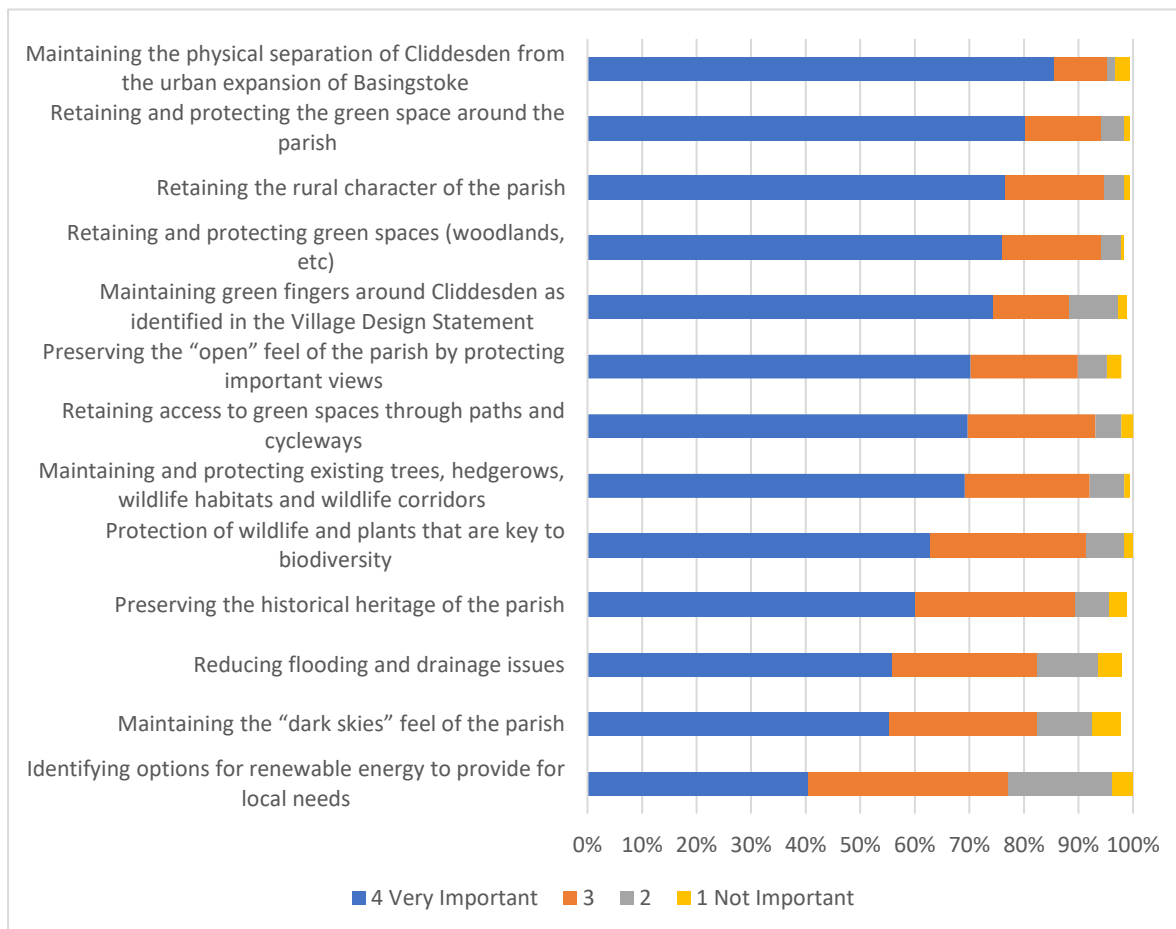
### **Basingstoke & Deane LDF Countryside Design Summary (Appendix 14), 2008**

#### *5. Chalk and Clay Downs - General Description*

*The Candover valley is a well-defined valley with sloping sides and a narrow bottom. It is underlain by chalk, with occasional deposits of clay and flint. The landscape is diverse with farmland, woodland and parkland unified by the valley form. Small villages have developed along the valley floor and are characteristically linear in nature. Elsewhere, farms and individual properties are widely dispersed.*

## 2. EVIDENCE FROM CONSULTATIONS

### The 2019 Community Questionnaire



#### Question 2: How important do you feel the following environmental issues are for Cliddesden?

Responses to question 2 indicated:

95% responded important or very important to *“Retaining the rural character of the parish”*,

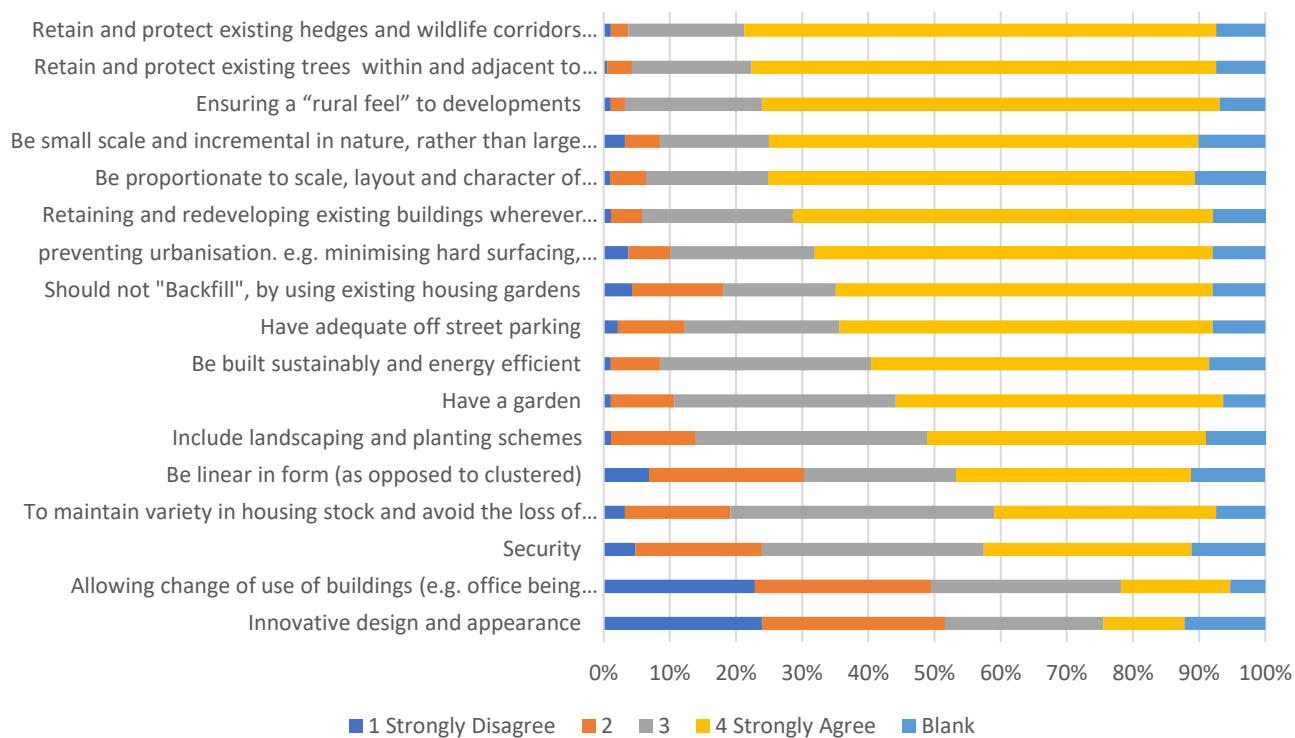
93% responded important or very important to *“Preserving the ‘open’ feel of the parish by protecting important views”*, and

89% responded important or very important to *“Preserving the historical heritage of the parish”*.

There are numerous public rights of way including footpaths and bridleways as well as permissive paths through and around the landscape of the Plan area. These rights of way together with road verges, hedgerows and the disused railway line are an important part of the Green Infrastructure network providing connectivity and corridors for wildlife. The footpaths and bridleways are an important feature for the community and should be protected and enhanced.

90% responded important or very important to *“Retaining access to ‘green spaces’ through paths and cycleways”*, and

92% responded important or very important to *“Maintaining and protecting existing trees hedgerows, wildlife habitats and wildlife corridors”*

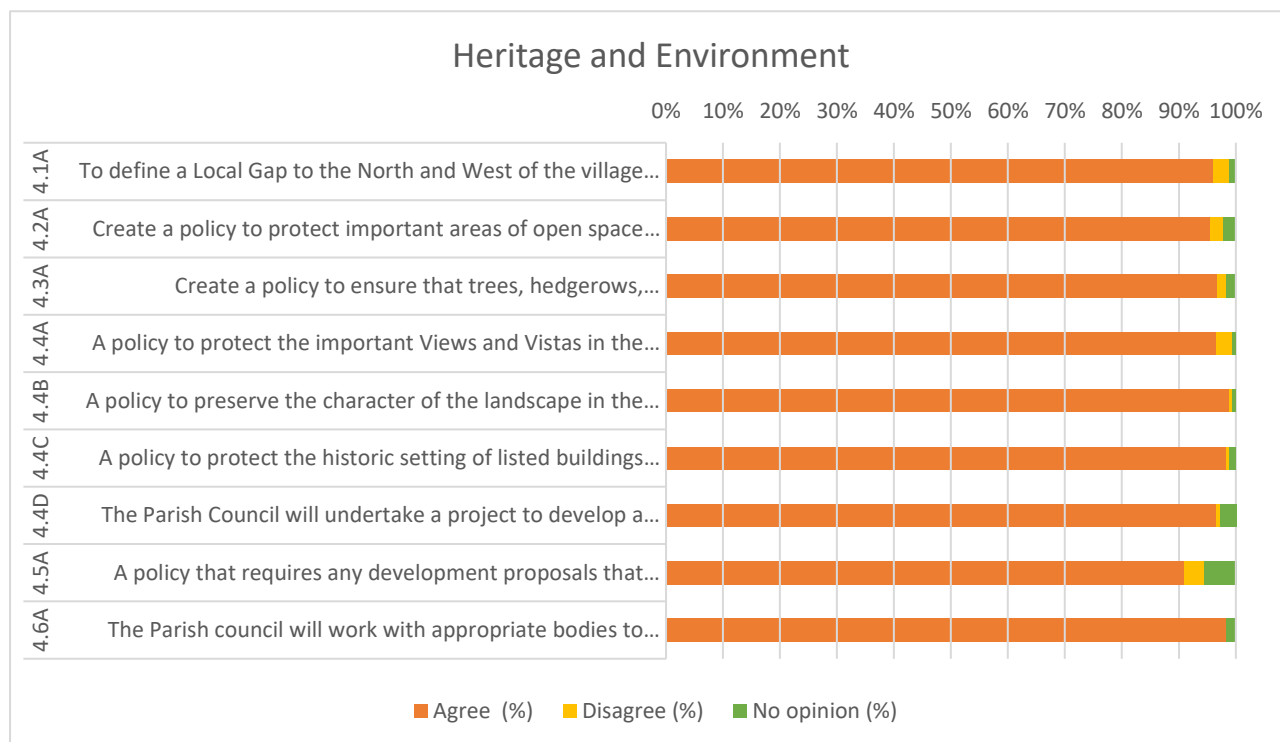


**Question 5: What principles should influence the design of any new residential developments?**

Responses to question 5 indicated:

- 94% agree or strongly agree to: *“Retain and protect existing hedges and wildlife corridors within and adjacent to developments sites”* and,
- 93% agree or strongly agree to: *“Retain and protect existing trees within and adjacent to development sites”*

**2020 Issues and Options Consultation**



**Question 4: Heritage and Environment**

In response to the 2020 Issues and Options consultation, 98.9% of respondents agreed with the option 4.4B to create “a policy to preserve the character of the landscape in the parish”.

**Landscape Visual Impact Assessment LVIA**

Introduction

In addition to other Landscape surveys (Basingstoke & Deane and CPRE), the Cliddesden NP team has undertaken an assessment of the area proposed as a Valued Landscape with in the Cliddesden Parish. The NPPF and the PPG explains how Character assessments can be used in the context of a Valued Landscape:

Paragraph 170 of the NPPF states:

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

- *protecting and enhancing **valued landscapes**, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status **or identified quality in the development plan**);*

The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) provides the following expansion on the NPPF:

*“How can planning policies conserve and enhance landscapes?”*

*The National Planning Policy Framework is clear that plans should recognise the*

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Landscape Assessment

The landscape of the Parish area has been assessed in accordance with the Landscape Institute’s guidance for assessing landscape value (the Landscape Visual Impact Assessment LVIA) using the following Criteria:

- The Quality of the Landscape: consider the physical condition of the landscape and individual elements within – how intact is the character?
- The Scenic Quality: this is the visual aspect of the landscape viewed from within the landscape itself and from further afield.
- The Rarity: how unusual is the landscape type? Are there particular elements or features that are rare?
- Conservation Importance: consider historical, archaeological, and cultural significance and any wildlife or geological elements of note.
- Recreational Value: what activities is the landscape used for?
- Perception: a landscape can be valued for other reasons – eg tranquility or wildness
- Associations: is the landscape associated with any historical, literary, or artistic events or people – this can add to the specialness. Ref: Newquay Neighbourhood Plan

The area has been assessed and subsequently concluded via the LVIA assessment and there is strong evidence to suggest this should be a valued landscape.

<p>The Quality of the Landscape</p>	<p>The landscape has been moulded over many centuries by agricultural activity resulting in a tapestry of fertile fields bounded by ancient and modern hedgerows, ancient trackways and more recent rights of way with substantial tree cover. The landscape character has remained intact throughout the centuries as ancient maps attest (see Figs 3a, 3b and 3c).</p>
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	<p>The parish lies in the North Hampshire Downs (see Fig 5) designated a National Character Area (NCA 130) by Natural England and is typical of chalk downland. (ALC) Grade 2 - very good quality agricultural land with minor limitations which affect crop yield, cultivations or harvesting and Grade 3 - good to moderate.</p>
The Scenic Quality	<p>The gently undulating landscape provides many vantage points for splendid rural views and vistas over farmland toward areas of ancient woodland, Audley's Wood parkland and woodpasture, and Hackwood House. See photos below. Important views are listed in the Important Views and Vistas topic paper.</p>
Conservation Importance	<p>The whole parish abounds with wildlife including, to name a few: fox, stoat, roe and fallow and muntjac deer, badger, rabbit and hare, hedgehog and several bat species. This landscape provides a joined-up system of places important for wild plants and animals to thrive and aids nature recovery.</p> <p>Tracts of open undeveloped areas of landscape are essential for carbon capture and sequestration thus helping to mitigate the effects of climate change.</p> <p>The crop marks and varied nature of archaeological finds at Swallick Farm suggest this area has been in agricultural use since the late Iron Age.</p>
Rarity	<p>The estate parkland to the north of the parish is a priority habitat. There are three areas of ancient woodland, one in the northeast and two in the south of the parish.</p>
Recreational Value	<p>The many rights of way throughout the parish enable residents and visitors from Basingstoke and the surrounding area to walk, jog, cycle and horse-ride, benefitting from clean air and healthy exercise.</p>
Perception	<p>Tranquil and calm with the mental health benefits of being in the countryside in stark contrast to the busy conurbation of Basingstoke. Quiet with the sound of birdsong and buzz of insects. Traffic noise from the M3 motorway on this side of the village is at a minimum.</p> <p>There is very little light pollution to spoil dark night skies so the Basingstoke Astronomical Society hold their twice-monthly meetings at the local primary school.</p>
Associations	<p>The poet and writer, Thomas Hardy, referred to the area in his novel, <i>Jude the Obscure</i>, as "Stoke Barehills", alluding to the sweeping landscape, "amid the open, chalk-soiled cornlands".</p> <p>The area around Basingstoke is known as "Jane Austin Country", Miss Austin being one of Britain's most celebrated novelists. Born in Steventon, just a few miles away, she may well have passed through Cliddesden during her youth.</p> <p>Cliddesden Railway Station was chosen as the location for two films, "The Wreckers" (1928) and "Oh Mr Porter!" (1937). It was renamed "Buggleskelly" in the films and although virtually nothing remains since the railway was dismantled the area is still visited regularly by members of The Will Hay Appreciation Society.</p>



**Landscape from a high point at the school looking northward**



**Landscape from the village looking southward**



**Landscape from Station Road looking northward**



**Landscape to Hackwood House**

### 3. EVIDENCE FROM OTHER SOURCES

#### The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2021)

para 174 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

*“Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:*

- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);*
- b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;*
- c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;*
- d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;*
- e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and*
- f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.”*

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) also states

*‘core land-use planning principles should underpin both plan-making and decision-taking’, and ‘take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas, protecting the Green Belts around them, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it’.*

<https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/category/5954148537204736>

**The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)** provides the following expansion on the NPPF:

*“How can planning policies conserve and enhance landscapes?”*

*The National Planning Policy Framework is clear that plans should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and that strategic policies should provide for the conservation and enhancement of landscapes. This can include nationally and locally-designated landscapes but also the wider countryside.”*

**Natural England** defines Green Infrastructure as follows:

*“Green Infrastructure is a strategically planned and delivered network comprising the broadest range of high quality ‘green spaces’ and other environmental features. It should be designed and managed as a multifunctional resource capable of delivering those ecological services and quality*

*of life benefits required by the communities it serves and needed to underpin sustainability. Its design and management should also respect and enhance the character and distinctiveness of an area with regard to habitats and landscape types.*

*“Green Infrastructure includes established ‘green spaces’ and new sites and should thread through and surround the built environment and connect the urban area to its wider rural hinterland. Consequently, it needs to be delivered at all spatial scales from sub-regional to local neighbourhood levels, accommodating both accessible natural green spaces within local communities and often much larger sites in the urban fringe and wider countryside.”*

**Natural England - Agricultural Land Classification (ALC)**

As can be seen in the figures below, the farmland in Cliddesden parish is graded 2 and 3 and, as such, is vital for the production of food.

Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) Grade 2 - Very Good quality agricultural land with minor limitations which affect crop yield, cultivations or harvesting and Grade 3 - Good to Moderate.



<u>Grade</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	Excellent
2	Very Good
3	Good to Moderate
4	Poor
5	Very Poor

**Conservation Area Appraisal 1981**

The Cliddesden Conservation Area was designated in 1981 by Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council in recognition of the special architectural and historic interest of the village. The Conservation Area Appraisal document as adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance by the Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council on 20 February 2003 and complements the policies of the Borough Local Plan

*“Open spaces are an essential component of the development and character of the Conservation Area. In Cliddesden many important views, or the setting to key buildings, are derived from the relationship of the buildings and the spaces formed around them.”*

*“The contribution of the open land, which surrounds the settlement, cannot be underestimated. The fields, pastureland and wooded clumps to the north-east are key in views into, through and out of the Conservation Area. These spaces provide context to Church Farm and setting to the vernacular buildings along the valley. These qualities apply to the open fields to the south-east and Manor Farm. An example of the relationship between the countryside and village are the glimpsed view between buildings on Church Lane from the pond, which visually leads to the fields*

*beyond. The open land to the west of Cliddesden Down House, also shows the village in its outstanding landscape context, as does the field opposite, the Southlea Development.”*

*“The landscape of the Conservation Area is characterised by a degree of openness that does not occur in adjacent countryside. Open arable land dominates, but small areas of woodland can be found. The village is situated within a shallow bowl in the landscape, with development descending the sides. Four roads enter the village and little can be seen of the settlement before entering. There are, however, extensive views out over the countryside from within the Conservation Area”*

The Conservation Area Appraisal highlights the importance of trees and hedges:

*“Individual and groups of mature trees are an essential component of the character of the Conservation Area and this is evident in both intimate views along the roads, and from longer vistas over the settlement”*

*“Hedges border many gardens, and uncultivated areas throughout the Conservation Area generally have hedge-lined boundaries, especially at the roadside. They strongly influence the character of Church Lane and Woods Lane in particular”*

### **Cliddesden Design Code Document June 2020**

The Cliddesden Design Code Document describes the ‘green fingers’ as follows:

*“A key characteristic of the settlement pattern of the village of Cliddesden is its connection to the surrounding countryside. There are many ‘green fingers’ of arable land and paddocks that surround the village, enhancing its rural character and ensuring that even within the village centre there are views to the fields beyond. Although Cliddesden sits in the folds of the valley, there is a sense of openness and extent provided by views across the ‘green fingers.’ This is a unique characteristic, which enhances the rural character of Cliddesden.”*

The Cliddesden Design Code Document refers to Green Infrastructure and Open Space. DC06 addresses the need to retain trees hedges and open spaces.

The Cliddesden Design Code Document describes woodlands as follows:

*“Ancient Woodland can be found at Buckshorn Copse in the south-east of the Neighbourhood Plan Area, whilst Ancient Replanted Woodland and Priority Deciduous Woodland Habitats can be found around Audley’s Wood to the northeast. Woodpasture and Parkland (BAP Priority Habitat) can also be found around Audley’s Wood, whilst at White Hill Dell to the south-west of the Plan Area there is a small pocket of Priority Deciduous Woodland at the disused pit, which connects with other Priority Woodlands and Ancient Woodlands beyond the Plan Area. A Traditional Orchard (Priority Habitat Inventory) can be found to the rear of properties south of Woods Lane and east of Cleresden Rise.”*

The Cliddesden Design Code Document describes hedgerows as follows:

*“The Neighbourhood Plan Area benefits from a pattern of historic hedgerows and woodland, which are prevalent across the area, but especially so in the south, where large areas of woodland and some plantations can be found. The disused railway line also creates a large vegetated swathe running north/south through the Plan Area. The settlement of Cliddesden benefits from a framework of mature trees and hedgerow boundaries, which contribute to its rural character.”*

The Design Code Document goes on further:

*“Mature trees and hedges contribute to the rural character of the Plan Area and these should be retained in any development. See Table 4 for a list of suitable trees that should be used in each Character Area. b. Historic hedgerows, Ancient and semi-natural woodlands contribute to the enclosed character of the Plan Area, especially in the south, and these should be retained and enhanced to ensure their long-term survival. Development that proposes to remove historic hedgerows and woodland should be resisted. c. Around the village of Cliddesden ‘green fingers’ play an important role in Green Infrastructure and contribute to the rural character of the village (see Section 3.3.2 and Figure 4). ‘Green Fingers’ are primarily arable and paddock fields, which provide an important visual resource, whilst their hedgerows and boundary trees contribute significantly to the biodiversity of the Plan Area.”*

The Cliddesden Design Code Document refers to Green Infrastructure and Open Space. DC06 addresses the need to retain trees, hedges and open spaces.

### **Cliddesden Village Design Statement 2004**

The Village Design Statement highlights how sympathetic development should be undertaken, this included:

*“preserve and enhance the extensive and important tree cover (see aerial photo above) within the village including mainly indigenous species of semi-mature trees and shrubs (see Appendix1). The existing cloak of natural vegetation should be extended to integrate any new buildings. Sufficient space should be allocated for the future growth of these plantings and their care.”*

*“blend into the landscape. There should be no building or development that would harm the skyline or be visually intrusive into the valley settlement”.*

*“maintain the far-reaching views from public footpaths”.*

*“maintain the villages’ rural character by:” “respecting the width and verges of lanes and their wildlife”.*

*“respect and enhance Cliddesden’s overall amenity value to the wider community of Basingstoke as a generally quiet, rural and tranquil adjunct to Basingstoke”.*

### **Hampshire County Council**

#### **Hampshire County Integrated Character Assessment 1 Status: FINAL May 2012** Basingstoke

Open Downs are described as:

*“Seasonally parched open arable landscape in high summer from A339 - low often fragmented hedge lines. Dramatic far-reaching views across the North Hampshire lowlands.”*

See Appendix A.

The parish of Cliddesden sites within character areas 8B, 8C and 6A

**BDBC’s Living Landscape Strategy** classifies Cliddesden’s landscape character as

‘Basingstoke Down’

#### **Basingstoke and Deane Landscape Character Assessment May 2021**

BDBC has updated the original 2001 study.

*“The updated Landscape Character Assessment will be part of the evidence base for the Local Plan and will help guide spatial planning and development management decisions within the Borough.”*

*“The strategic aim for the Basingstoke Down Character Area is to maintain the general openness of the landscape whilst enhancing the integrity of the hedgerow network and condition of existing woodland; limiting the effect of settlement expansion on the landscape and maintaining the separate identities of settlements where possible.”*

Page 25 - 3.9 *“The 1995 Borough assessment distinguishes between the clay plateau landscapes on areas of different topography, notably between the flatter areas of continuous clay, and the series of ridges and valleys where erosion has worn away much of the clay. These differences have also been defined in this assessment, together with a distinction in the degree of enclosure within the flatter clay plateau areas: ▪ Semi-enclosed clay plateau farmland (C6) - predominantly large-scale arable fields with some areas of pasture; high frequency of woodland (predominantly semi-natural broadleaved) and a strong structure of hedgerows with distinctive oak trees; some visual containment and enclosure by vegetation or landform, but the scale of field pattern allows more distant views and creates a semi-enclosed character; settlements infrequent and occasional hamlets are widely dispersed and linked via a network of narrow and indirect lanes, lending a sense of remoteness to the area. ▪ Enclosed clay plateau farmland (C7) - as C6 but with a stronger sense of enclosure created by vegetation cover. Enclosed clay plateau valley farmland (C8) - distinguished from C6 and C7 by topography, with a complex system of steep-sided, enclosed valleys and ridges contrasting with flatter plateau landscapes; steep slopes, often wooded, and dense hedgerows and blocks of woodland also occurring on upper slopes; visual enclosure provided by landform and vegetation, creating an intimate land- scape; occasional hamlets and villages with narrow lanes running along valley floor and then upwards onto clay plateau.”*

The north of the parish of Cliddesden is in the CHARACTER AREA 16: BASINGSTOKE DOWN and east CHARACTER AREA 18: TUNWORTH AND UPTON GREY DOWN See Map Fig 6 on page 115 and text on pages 115/117.

It sets out guidance including aims and guidelines for land management and built development to maintain landscape character. See pages 115/117

*“Conserve, enhance and restore the woodlands through effective long-term management and replanting to retain their ecological value, including in particular areas of ancient semi-natural woodland such as Skyers Wood/Mays Copse to the north, and Rowley Copse, Kempshott/Shortwood Copse and Middle Copse to the south.*

*\*Carefully site new development, ensuring it is consistent with the pattern of existing settlement and limits inappropriate urbanisation of the landscape from expansion of built form, particularly on the edge of Basingstoke;*

- *Conserve existing historic settlements, and maintain the character of associated conservation areas, including Cliddesden*
- *Avoid the location of new large or bulky structures where visually intrusive on this Character Area. Subject any development to rigorous landscape and visual impact assessment, site carefully, and design to minimise impact and integrate with the rural context; ▪ Conserve the rural roads lanes, minimising small-scale incremental change such as signage, fencing and kerbing, or improvements to the road network which could change their character. Promote the use of traditional signage features with particular regard to local style and materials”*

Ref: [Landscape Character Assessment - May 2021 \(basingstoke.gov.uk\)](https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk)

### **Planning application reasons for refusal include harm to the landscape which shows the landscape of the parish is valued.**

A planning application to build two houses and a later application to extend the garden area were refused by BDBC Planning Dept and dismissed at appeal. The Planning Inspectorate states: *“The landscape hereabouts is pleasant rolling countryside.”*

Appeal Ref: APP/H1705/W/21/3279572 Land adjacent to 14 Hackwood Lane, Cliddesden, Basingstoke RG25 2NH 9). *“In my judgement this would be harmful to the rural character of the locality and be in conflict with Local Plan Policy EM1 which seeks to avoid such harm. It would not be sympathetic to the character and visual quality of the local landscape, nor be sympathetic to its character.”*

Appeal A Ref: APP/H1705/W/22/3302126 and Appeal B APP/H1705/W/22/3302127 Faerie Meadows, 14 Hackwood Lane, Cliddesden RG25 2NH *“I find that the development in Appeal A and in Appeal B cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area”.*

### **Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council’s Green Infrastructure Strategy Nov 2018** states:

*“Accessible and cared-for ‘green spaces’ provide opportunity for physical activity and contact with nature which has direct health benefits, reducing (in combination with other factors) the occurrence of heart and respiratory disease, stress, mental illnesses and obesity and associated economic benefits Recreation and Leisure ‘green spaces’ close to residential areas.”*

*“‘Green spaces’ and habitat networks are essential to healthy ecosystems. Habitats are essential for the species that they support and connectivity allows for foraging, dispersal and reduces vulnerability to local species extinction through genetic exchange and repopulation. Accessible green spaces allow people to experience nature, which in turn encourages environmental stewardship.”*

*Green Infrastructure describes the network of ‘green spaces’ and natural elements that connect through cities, towns, villages and countryside. Green Infrastructure includes a wide variety of spaces and elements including parks, playing fields, woodlands, streams and river corridors, allotments and churchyards. It is important to consider the features and spaces that make up our neighbourhood. From the results of the consultation open day and the Questionnaire, it is clear that the Local Community place high value on, ‘green spaces’, and place great importance on protecting the environment.*

### **B&DBC Supplementary Planning Document (SPB) July 2018:** Landscape Biodiversity and Trees, section 6.1 states:

*Trees, woodlands and hedgerows offer many environmental benefits. As well as capturing carbon dioxide and providing oxygen, trees remove pollution from the air and improve the quality of water. Trees provide food and shelter for wildlife including bats, birds and insects. Visually, trees and woodlands often form significant landscape features, being seen across a wide area. In urban areas they can be important historic features which help to soften the built form and provide more desirable places to live and work. In rural areas they provide a character to the landscape and contribute to the mosaic of land use and habitats. All the above has a direct positive impact on our health and wellbeing and demonstrates the importance of maintaining a healthy and diverse tree resource. Retained and new tree planting can also help to add value to new development (as trees have been shown to increase the value of nearby properties), and create more positive perceptions of new development.*

The SPB document describes how issues relating to trees will need to be assessed to in the planning process to ensure these benefits can be achieved.

**BDBC Notice of Motion to EPH Committee** - Protection and enhancement of the North Hampshire Downs Proposer: Councillor Ruffell Seconder: Councillor McCormick 18 March 2021

The North Hampshire Downs need to have a protected designation to conserve and enhance its natural beauty for the benefit of the natural environment, its residents and the surrounding communities. The North Hampshire Downs stretches from Dummer in the West to Ewshot in the east. It is rich in ancient woodland and provides undisturbed habitats for wildlife and fauna and has 4 SSSI's. It is the source of tributaries that feed the rivers Itchen, Hart, Loddon, Lyde, Wey and Whitewater. Its landscape value has been recognised in part by the designation of Grade 1 parkland at Hackwood and the protection of trees at Queen's View in Ewshot. It remains remote in terms of having dark skies, lack of connection to mains gas and drainage, and landscapes where no buildings or roads can be seen. The landscape is enjoyed by walkers, cyclists and horse riders from those who live in and near to the North Hampshire Downs. It is regarded as a green lung for the residents of Basingstoke. The North Wessex Downs AONB has reached out to the North Hampshire Downs with a view to exploring designation so that the chalk landscapes can become connected to those of the South Downs National Park. The beautiful landscape of the North Hampshire Downs and the natural environment that it sustains is under threat from expanding populations around its edges. The natural environment within the North Hampshire Downs is in urgent need of protection and restoration.

**DEFRA – The Environment Bill** - PART 1 ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE CHAPTER 1 IMPROVING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT - Environmental targets and improvement plans. The Environment Bill is now an act and has legal status:

[Environment Act 2021 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

Local Nature Recovery Strategies are a new, England-wide system of spatial strategies that will establish priorities and map proposals for specific actions to drive nature's recovery and provide wider environmental benefits.

**COUNCIL for the PROTECTION of RURAL ENGLAND (CPRE)** Their assessment of the landscape surrounding Cliddesden (entitled: TRACT OF LAND TO THE SOUTH EAST OF BASINGSTOKE NPPF VALUED LANDSCAPE, January 2021) highlights:

- The attractive and distinctive chalk downland landscape with high quality views from many points to a clearly defined ridgeline, and long-distance views over Basingstoke
- The lack of development and overall sense of tranquillity
- The high-quality public experience of this landscape from public and permissive rights of way – cyclists, walkers and runners from Basingstoke and further afield make regular use of the lanes and public rights of way
- The contribution this landscape makes to the landscape setting of Basingstoke and views from the built-up area
- The important contribution of this tract of landscape to the characteristics of the Basingstoke Open Downs and Basingstoke Down identified in Hampshire County Council's and Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council's own assessments
- Cliddesden is at the start of the downlands and there is a dramatic contrast between the densely developed townscape of Basingstoke and the countryside to the southeast of the M3 with thinly scattered villages and hamlets such as Cliddesden, Winslade, Farleigh Wallop and Ellisfield, and occasional isolated farms. These settlements reflect the pattern of early medieval manor houses associated with a church and manor farm which have grown gradually over many centuries but

remain largely intact and protected by conservation area status. They give the historic settlement context to the Area, **notably the village of Cliddesden which immediately adjoins the Area.**

**Christopher Napier of CPRE Hampshire** says,

*‘Landscapes play a vital role in tackling the climate emergency by capturing carbon, cleaning the air, helping to slow flood waters and providing habitats for wildlife. As a feature of open countryside and green space, they are also important to people’s health and wellbeing, something that has been proved during the coronavirus pandemic.*

*The National Planning Policy Framework sets out that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing Valued Landscapes. We strongly advocate that all local planning authorities in Hampshire carry out landscape assessments in the process of revising their Local Plans. This would ensure that where they exist, they are protected in Local Plans for current and future generations.*

*CPRE Hampshire’s assessment work highlights the importance of considering new development in terms of landscape suitability and the setting of the natural environment.’*

CPRE Hampshire has submitted its landscape assessment to Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council’s planning department.

The CPRE document concludes:

*“CPRE Hampshire considers that the Area has demonstrable attributes which raises it above the ordinary, such that it is both an NPPF Valued Landscape in its own right and as an essential part of a tract of NPPF Valued Landscape extending north-eastwards from Farleigh Wallop to Hackwood Park. Accordingly, NPPF paragraph 170(a) applies and requires it to be protected.”*

**See Appendix B** - NPPF VALUED LANDSCAPE - A report by CPRE Hampshire entitled “TRACT of LAND to the SOUTH EAST of BASINGSTOKE NPPF VALUED LANDSCAPE, January 2021”

## **BASINGSTOKE, TADLEY AND BRAMLEY LANDSCAPE CAPACITY STUDY FEBRUARY 2008**

<https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/content/page/25877/Landscape%20Capacity%20Study%20Final%20Report%202008.pdf>

This report covers a significant part of the Cliddesden parish, towards the North of the parish. The character areas BA18 and BA19 fall within the parish of Cliddesden. The character area BA20 falls partly within the parish of Cliddesden and partly within a neighbouring parish. The map on page 98 of the document shows the areas assessed.

*“Landscape Capacity is defined as ‘the extent to which a particular area or type of landscape is able to accommodate change without significant effects on character or overall change in landscape type’.”*

Summarising from this document:

Area: BASINGSTOKE

Local Character Area: BA18 – Audley’s Wood

SUMMARY OF OVERALL LANDSCAPE CAPACITY

Landscape Capacity of Area: LOW

This area lies to the south of Basingstoke beyond the M3, which provides a very strong boundary between the urban and countryside areas. The countryside character is reinforced by the low level of intervisibility provided by the landform and nature of the vegetation. These elements along with the well managed grounds of Audley's Wood and the farmland add to the visual qualities of the area. As a consequence the landscape capacity of this area is low.

BA18 character area was assessed as having a medium/high Landscape Value, medium /high Visual Sensitivity and medium Landscape Sensitivity.

Area: BASINGSTOKE

Local Character Area: BA19 – Cliddesden Valley

SUMMARY OF OVERALL LANDSCAPE CAPACITY

Landscape Capacity of Area: MEDIUM/ LOW

This character area is located to the south of Basingstoke and focuses around a distinctive dry valley feature, the centre of which is the village of Cliddesden. The area is predominantly arable farmland which influences the character of the area and means that the higher ground is more sensitive in relation to skyline views. The M3 provides a strong northern edge to the area, clearly defining the town/countryside split and limiting the sense of tranquillity. The character of the edge of the village in addition to the hedgerow structure would allow some mitigation planting in some limited locations.

BA19 character area was assessed as having a Medium Landscape Value, medium/high Visual Sensitivity, and medium Landscape Sensitivity.

Area: BASINGSTOKE

Local Character Area: BA20 – Farleigh/Cliddesden Slopes

SUMMARY OF OVERALL LANDSCAPE CAPACITY

Landscape Capacity of Area: LOW

The steep, prominent slopes of the area are a very significant local feature providing the visual and physical setting to Basingstoke. They are important in a wide number of views throughout the town. The M3 provides a clear boundary between the built up and large scale open rural area, within which there are no areas where development could be accommodated. As a consequence it is considered that the landscape of this area has no capacity for development.

BA20 character area was assessed as having a Medium Landscape Value, high Visual Sensitivity and medium high Landscape Sensitivity.

### **Appreciation of landscape and Basingstoke Half Marathon.**

The Basingstoke half marathon is an annual event which began in 2011 and takes place in October. The route traverses the parish - see map below.

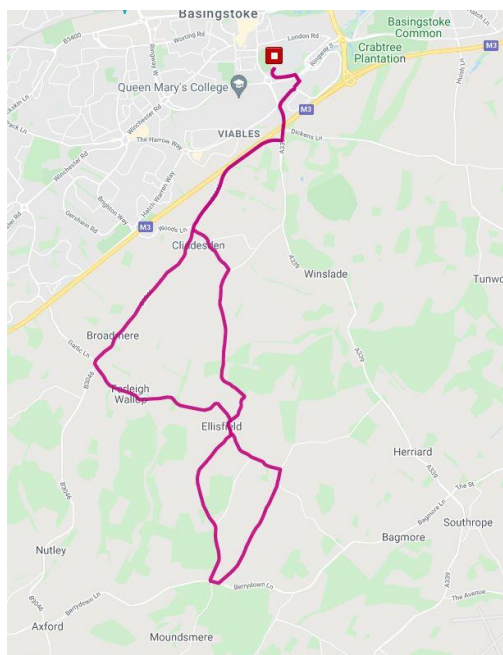
The Basingstoke half marathon website states:

*“The course for the Basingstoke half marathon is a challenging one, incorporating some legendary hills near Cliddesden and Farleigh Wallop, beautiful countryside and quaint villages.*

*You will be able to take in fantastic views of some of Hampshire's picturesque landscape and have a bird's eye view of Basingstoke.”*

This annual event is further evidence of the value of the local landscape to the broader community.

## Half Marathon route



**STaNHd** is an organization formed to protect the landscape of Cliddesden parish in response to a proposal to develop the fields encircling the village settlement with a large housing estate covering over 300 hectares. The petition in objection to this proposal has, to date, gained over 10,000 signatures. This proves that this landscape is highly valued by far more people than just the residents of the village.

<https://www.stanhd.com>

## 4. SUMMARY

The area of the Valued Landscape defined in diagram Fig 1: Map of Valued Landscape, has been described in the following assessments studies, documents and character areas:

### The Basingstoke, Tadley and Bramley Landscape Capacity study 2008 (BTBLCA)

-The part of BA20 and the part of BA18 which lies within the parish. The area defined by BA19 is not within the Valued landscape and the boundary of BA19 together with the parish boundary defines the Valued Landscape for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Hampshire Integrated Character Assessment (HICA): -Part of HICA CCA8B, part of CCA8C, part of CCA 6A,

Basingstoke and Deane Landscape Assessment (BDLA) Part of BDLA LCA 16 and part of LCA 18

CPRE document: TRACT OF LAND TO THE SOUTH EAST OF BASINGSTOKENPPF VALUED LANDSCAPE, January 2021)

-The part of the area contained within the Parish.

CPRE Hampshire considers that the Area has demonstrable attributes which raises it above the ordinary, such that it is both an NPPF Valued Landscape in its own right and as an essential part of a tract of NPPF Valued Landscape extending north-eastwards from Farleigh Wallop to Hackwood Park. Accordingly, NPPF paragraph 170(a) applies and requires it to be protected.

Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) - The landscape of the Parish area has been assessed in accordance with the Landscape Institute's guidance for assessing landscape value as per the table on page 13 of this document.

The character areas defined in the above assessments include but are not limited to Cliddesden parish. The Cliddesden Neighbourhood Plan can only influence the parish area and therefore only this area has been considered for the purposes of the policy. The Valued Landscape is constrained to the border of the parish, with the exclusion of BA19 (Landscape Capacity Study 2008)

Whilst this landscape study was performed in 2008 it is still relevant since there has been no significant change in the landscape and very little in terms of development in the area defined as Valued Landscape in the Neighbourhood Plan. The development within the parish that has taken place has mostly been in the character area BA19, which does not form part of the Valued Landscape.

It is worth noting that adjacent to parish to the east (including the Grade 1 listed parkland at Hackwood Park), west and south may qualify for Valued Landscape status, as described in reference documents such as the CPRE document and other landscape studies, as the landscape exhibits similar qualities to those within the Cliddesden parish boundary. However, for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan, the scope of this Valued landscape is bounded by the geographic area of the Cliddesden parish.

Taking into account the following points below, the area has demonstrable attributes which raises it above the ordinary, such that it is both an NPPF Valued Landscape in its own right and as an essential part of a tract of NPPF Valued Landscape extending to the west and south of the parish and to the east to Hackwood Park.

- the attractive and distinctive chalk downland landscape with high quality views from many points and long-distance views over Basingstoke
- the lack of development and overall sense of tranquillity despite traffic noise from the nearby M3
- the high-quality public experience of this landscape from public and permissive rights of way
- the contribution this landscape makes to the landscape setting of Basingstoke and views from the built-up area
- the important contribution of this tract of landscape to the characteristics identified in HICA CCA 8B, CCA8C, CCA 6A and BDLA LCA 16 and LCA 18 .

Therefore, NPPF paragraph 170(a) applies and requires it to be protected.