

BREDGAR PARISH COUNCIL



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Swale Borough Council
Swale House

Attn Anna Stonor, Senior Planner

30th November 2017

Dear Anna

Local Landscape Designation Review - Bredgar Parish Council Response

Set out below this letter are the completed survey response forms, together with a map indicating the location of the numbered sites referred to and a description of those sites.

In addition Bredgar Parish Council raises the following matters which we feel should be taken into consideration.

Much of the countryside surrounding Bredgar is designated as AONB, with good reason as indicated by the multiple special features listed in the response form. The land adjoining the AONB and lying to the North of Bredgar, and to the South of Sittingbourne is comprised largely of high quality (Grade 2) agricultural land, including orchards. This is interspersed with wooded pockets including some ancient woodland, and other uncultivated areas which are valuable for wildlife.

The Parish Council seeks the designation of a buffer zone to the North of the AONB, running along its boundary from at least Milstead to the East and the A249 to the West. Such zones have been implemented in relation to other AONBs, up to 5km in width. It is felt that 2km of

width would be practical in this case (as to go any further would encroach on Sittingbourne) and would be invaluable for the protection of the AONB.

The benefits of such a buffer zone would be:

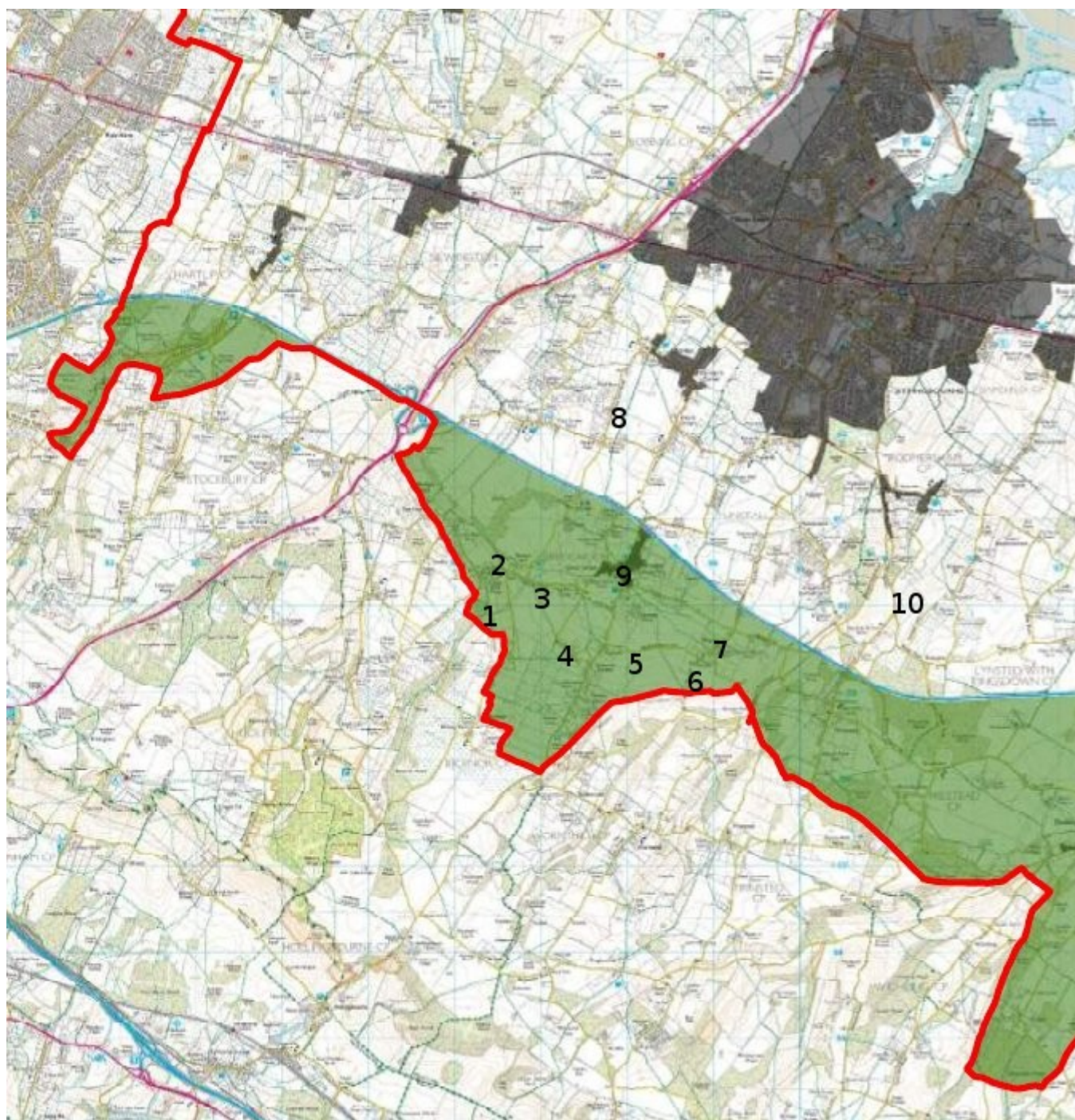
- to preserve views from the AONB, across characteristic agricultural land
- to preserve views to the AONB, including from the rural lanes and multiple footpaths, without hindrance of newly introduced obstacles
- to preserve the tranquility of the AONB
- to avoid abrupt changes in the landscape on leaving the AONB
- to encourage bio diversity in the AONB setting and therefore protect that within the AONB
- to assist in the maintenance of relatively 'dark skies' in the AONB

Your attention is also drawn to features of the landscape within the proposed buffer zone which commend it for special designation in its own right, including its importance as a Countryside Gap, in particular between the South West of Sittingbourne and Bexon Lane.

Yours faithfully

BREDGAR PARISH COUNCIL

Key to Valued Landscape Areas within and around Bredgar Parish



Maps No's	Description	Landscape Values
1	Land from Deans Bottom	Provides a rural scenic setting at the base of a dry valley. Wonderful views and footpaths South West up the valley, through chalk grassland and ancient woodland towards Bicknor.
2	Land from Deans Hill (Top)	A footpath along the ridge from the top of Deans Hill with beautiful views along the valley towards Stockbury, with the Church in the distance the way. Then just through the hedge and looking North East views across the Swale.
3	Deans Hill Road and footpaths crossing the wide arable fields.	Wide views northward out across Sittingbourne , Sheppey the Swale, the Swale Estuary, Whitstable and round to Dunkirk. Looking over traditional sheep grazed orchard at Stiff Street.
4	Land adjacent to Blind Mary's Lane	Wide views northward out across Sittingbourne , Sheppey the Swale, the Swale Estuary and across to Essex. Orchards above and Bredgar Church prominent in the landscape.
5	Land adjacent to Bashford Barn Lane	Wide views northward, over the orchards east of Bredgar, towards Sheppey and over the Swale.
6	Land south of Hawks Hill Lane and Bashford Barn Lane,	Following the footpath south from the meeting point of Bashford Barn Lane and Hawks Hill Lane you pass into a tranquil setting with views towards Bottom Pond Lane and over

		Trundle Wood.
7	Hawks Hill Lane, Bexon Manor	Historical thatched building Bexon Manor C1500 a fine example of a Kentish Wealden Hall House at the junction with Lime Kiln Lane.
8	Grade 2 agricultural land north of Bredgar and the M2.	Intensively used for arable, orchard and some grazing. This area provides an essential buffer zone for the Mid Kent Downs AONB. This high grade agricultural land deserves
9	Bredgar Village	Bredgar village with many heritage buildings within its conservation area and defining village pond. Examples of buildings are Chantry House, Burnham House, Brewers House, The Chantries, The Old Post Office, Downings, Wesley Cottage and many more.
10	Land south of Highsted Valley, Newbury and north of the M2.	Important buffer zone for the AONB. Providing recreation for residents and wildlife habitat.

Survey Sheets 1 & 2 follow.

Survey Sheet 1 - Valued Landscapes Table – TO BE COMPLETED BY STAKEHOLDERS

Reason Landscape is of Value	Numbers	Location and brief description of relevant feature or characteristic where applicable (e.g. note what the known cultural association is, what the distinctive scenic qualities are, or what type of outdoor recreation the landscape is important for)
Landscapes which are regionally or nationally rare	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,9	Mid Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Wide arable fields, dry valleys with internationally important chalk grassland, shaws and woodland.
Landscapes which provide important habitats for wildlife	1,2,3,6, 8, 10	The hedgerows, shaws and woodlands in these areas provide a vital corridor for wildlife between the large arable fields.
Landscapes with important built heritage	7,9	Bredgar village with many historic buildings within its conservation area.
Landscapes which have widely known cultural associations	9	Bredgar 11 th Century Church is a fine example of flint churches typical of Kent
Landscapes that have distinctive scenic qualities	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8, 10	Wide arable fields beneath large skies, commanding far reaching views northward out over to Sheppey and the Swale Estuary. Hedgerows following country lanes. Apple and cherry orchards visible to the south and eastwards both sides of the M2 from Bredgar.
Landscapes that have a strong sense of wildness and tranquillity	1,6	Areas of Bredgar Parish that are particularly tranquil, close to woodland or with views southward into the Mid Kent Downs.
Landscapes which are important for outdoor recreation	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8, 9, 10	Bredgar Parish and areas to the North of AONB (8 and 10) provide the gateway to the Mid Kent Downs. Well used by cyclists and walkers. Providing important facilities for visitors, such as shop, Post Office, cafe, Church, Pub, village pond, footpaths, woodland and country lanes.

Please provide your name and the name of your organisation:

Bredgar Parish Council

Please provide an email address if you would like to be invited to attend a presentation on the findings of this review:

bpc.clerk@outlook.com

Survey Sheet 2 - Assessment Criteria – TO BE COMPLETED BY STAKEHOLDERS

Criteria	Factors Considered
Local distinctiveness	<input type="checkbox"/> The presence of rare elements or features in the landscape or the presence of a rare landscape character type <input type="checkbox"/> Whether the landscape contains a particular character and/or features or elements which are considered <u>particularly important or representative examples</u>
Landscape quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Intactness and coherency of the landscape <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape condition
Scenic quality and perceptual aspects	<input type="checkbox"/> Distinctive or promoted views <input type="checkbox"/> Visual qualities including wildness, tranquillity and remoteness
Recreational value	<input type="checkbox"/> Public recreational access opportunities within the countryside, such as public rights of way, common land, open access land, country parks

Please provide your name and the name of your organisation:

Penny Twaites / Brian Clarke – Bredgar Parish Council

Do you agree that these criteria and factors considered are appropriate for the review?

Yes

Are there any other criteria and factors that you think should be incorporated?

Yes, the condition of the landscape during the night time should be included within the review. This will provide the opportunity to identify those areas that are least blighted by light pollution and provide opportunities to protect such areas with appropriate policies (such as promoting the creation of minimal lighting buffer zones around them).

Any other comments?

The M2 motorway has significant noise impact across the whole of Swale. It is in a slight cutting as it passes nearby to Bredgar and this has a small beneficial effect. Swale might reduce the noise impact of the motorway if planning could encourage more native woodland along its length.

Kent Downs AONB Management Plan Policies seek to achieve improvement in tranquillity and darks skies. Dark skies are a defining characteristics of rural areas like Bredgar. Bredgar Parish Council supports those policies and would strongly support the establishment of a 2km buffer zone north of the M2 and Bredgar. This buffer zone would protect the high grade agricultural land and the dark skies across Swale's part of the Mid Kent Downs.

See the pictorial representation below of the light pollution from the Swale Mid Kent Downs AONB areas down into Sittingbourne. Darker skies indicated by dark blue, blue and green areas. Light polluted skies

shown yellow to dark red/grey. Swale boundary shown in black, AONB boundary in pink. Establishing a 2KM boundary (hatched red) alongside the AONB boundary where light pollution is strongly resisted will help protect the AONB dark skies.

