

Crowhurst Neighbourhood Development Plan

Environment Description

This is the first version of a live document which can be added to as Crowhurst evolves and environmental issues arise and subside in the context of life in the village.

It has been compiled and produced by Sonia Plato and Frances Royston, with assistance and contributions from Will Kemp, Mary Boorman, Tim Knaggs, Tom Masters, The Rev'd Dr Michael Brydon, Dr John Feltwell, Paul Johnson, Ros Day, Chris Davidson and others who contributed to the work of the Neighbourhood Development Plan Environment Task Group.

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Photo by Steve Royston

Crowhurst – a rural and agricultural Village of the High Weald

Introduction

Crowhurst “the wooded hill” is a rural and agricultural village of the High Weald in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This ancient village name continues to be an accurate description of the village as it is today. Ancient trees and deciduous woods mix with new woodland areas across the hills and valleys that make up the parish. The lack of a main road running through Crowhurst, along with the linear nature of village development, has allowed the village to keep its mix of fields, woodland, gills, ponds, streams and farms. At present environmental corridors link all these sites and other heritage sites into a harmonious whole.

However, Crowhurst is not an island. We also need to consider outlying areas and those bordering the village as significant areas in environmental terms to preserve and enable connectivity for wildlife.

This has been compiled using the following sources as well as local knowledge.

Rother District Council Core Strategy (2014)

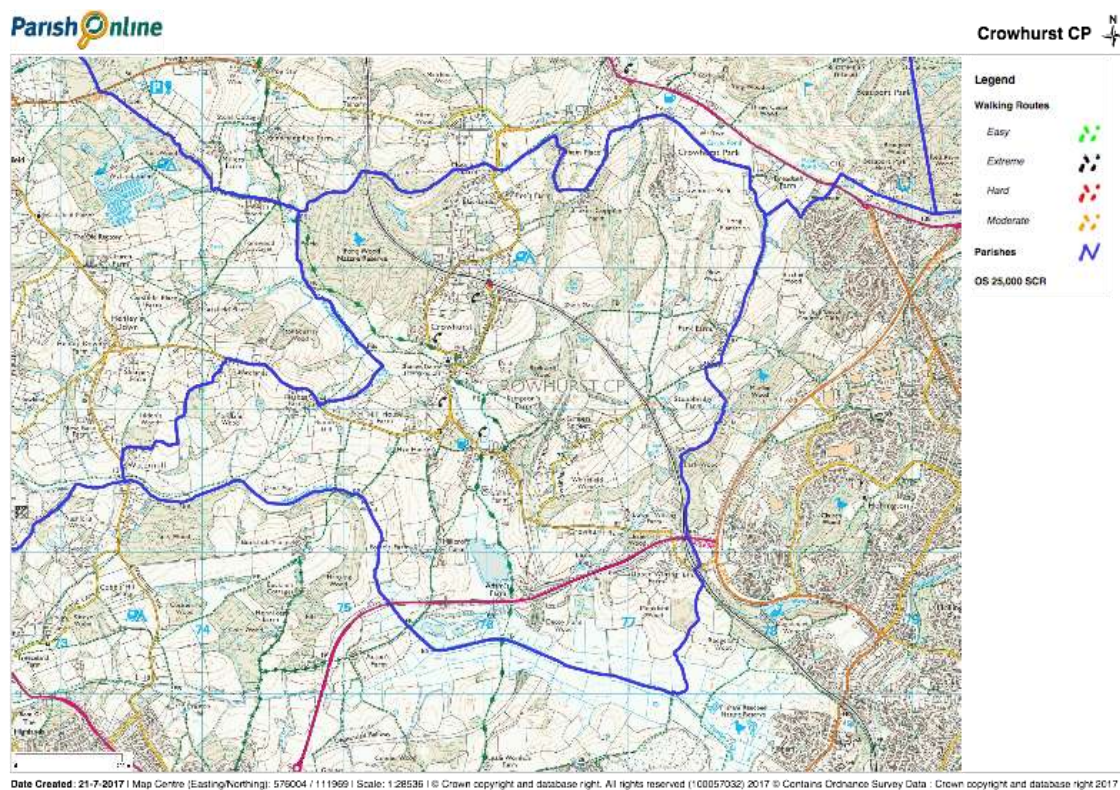
These concerns fall in line with Rother District Council's environment policies published in its core strategy (2014):

EN1 Landscape Stewardship: stresses the need to **protect and enhance local landscapes and its features including the visual character, woodlands, native hedgerows, tranquil areas;**

EN3: Design Quality of new developments that consider the landscape setting and incorporate **sustainable design and construction**

EN5 in **support of bio-diversity and green spaces.**

Reference: Figure 2: High Weald AONB Crowhurst Heritage and Character Assessment August 2017



1: Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan (NP) and Surveys.

As part of the NP process, a Site Survey Report was carried out in the village in July 2017 which showed the following:

1.1

- The Crowhurst Shortlisted Site Survey Report (July 2017) indicates that over 80% of residents place a high value on environmental concerns.
- Minimising **flooding**, maintaining **views** and **protecting trees** are very important for over 80% of respondents.

- 78% of respondents feel the inclusion of landscape measures to promote the **movement of wildlife** is very important while fewer respondents (60%) feel designing in **biodiversity** features such as nesting boxes is very important.
- 67% feel **keeping farm houses with their farm land** is very important.
- The inclusion of **renewable energy** and features to reduce heat loss are important to respondents but less so than the other environmental issues.

1.2 **Consultations with young people** in Crowhurst which took place in 2016/2017 highlighted the importance of **maintaining** the agricultural nature of the village as well as **enhancing** its rural nature and wealth of wildlife and natural resources.

References: Crowhurst Primary School Consultation 26th November 2016, Scouts Consultation February 2017, Brownies 22nd November 2016

1.3 “61% (11/18) of respondents feel that having **green spaces and woodland areas** within the village that are **not for development** is very important. This is followed by **maintaining the views** of the countryside (56%, 10/18), and **protecting and enhancing nature and wildlife** (56%, 10/18). **Reducing litter and fly tipping** is felt to be the most important environmental improvement (53%, 8/15). “

Reference: Crowhurst Secondary Student Survey Nov 16

Section 1 Recommendations

The Rother District council Core Strategy recognizes the importance of landscape stewardship (EN1), the importance of construction in harmony with the landscape setting (EN3) and supports biodiversity (EN5). Crowhurst is recognized as having good biodiversity (Sussex Wildlife Biodiversity Report 2017) and the Neighbourhood Plan Site Survey Report of 2017 (1:1) along with surveys of young people (1:2) show that local residents are strongly supportive of this. Therefore for the future, good practice such as environmentally friendly gardening, farming and landscaping should be supported and encouraged. For example, porous property boundaries, awareness of significant and or unusual trees, plants, ponds and woodland, should inform any planning decisions.

Any building should be sympathetic to nature and in keeping with the character of the village in scale and design e.g. low rise. *Reference Resident Survey July 2017*

2: Wildlife, Biodiversity and Connectivity – Areas of environmental significance

2.1 AONB/SSSI Classification

Crowhurst’s diverse environment is listed in the Sussex Bio-diversity Record as follows: Lowland fen, Reedbed, Traditional orchard, Coastal & floodplain grazing marsh, Deciduous woodland, Ancient woodland, Gill woodland, Veteran and Ancient Trees (eg the Churchyard Yew) on the Tree Register of British Isles.

Reference SSSI ENV Map 1 and AONB ENV Map 2

Reference Woodland Plan ENV Map 3

Reference Sussex Wildlife Biodiversity Report 2017

Crowhurst is exceptional in having three **Sites of Special Scientific Interest** inside or bordering the parish boundary:

Combe Haven, the Fore Wood, Marline Valley Woods.

In addition, parts of the village are subject to attention and listing by Environmental Stewardship Agreement

National Trust

RSPB reserve – Fore Wood

Sussex Wildlife Trust reserve

Reference SSSI ENV Map 1

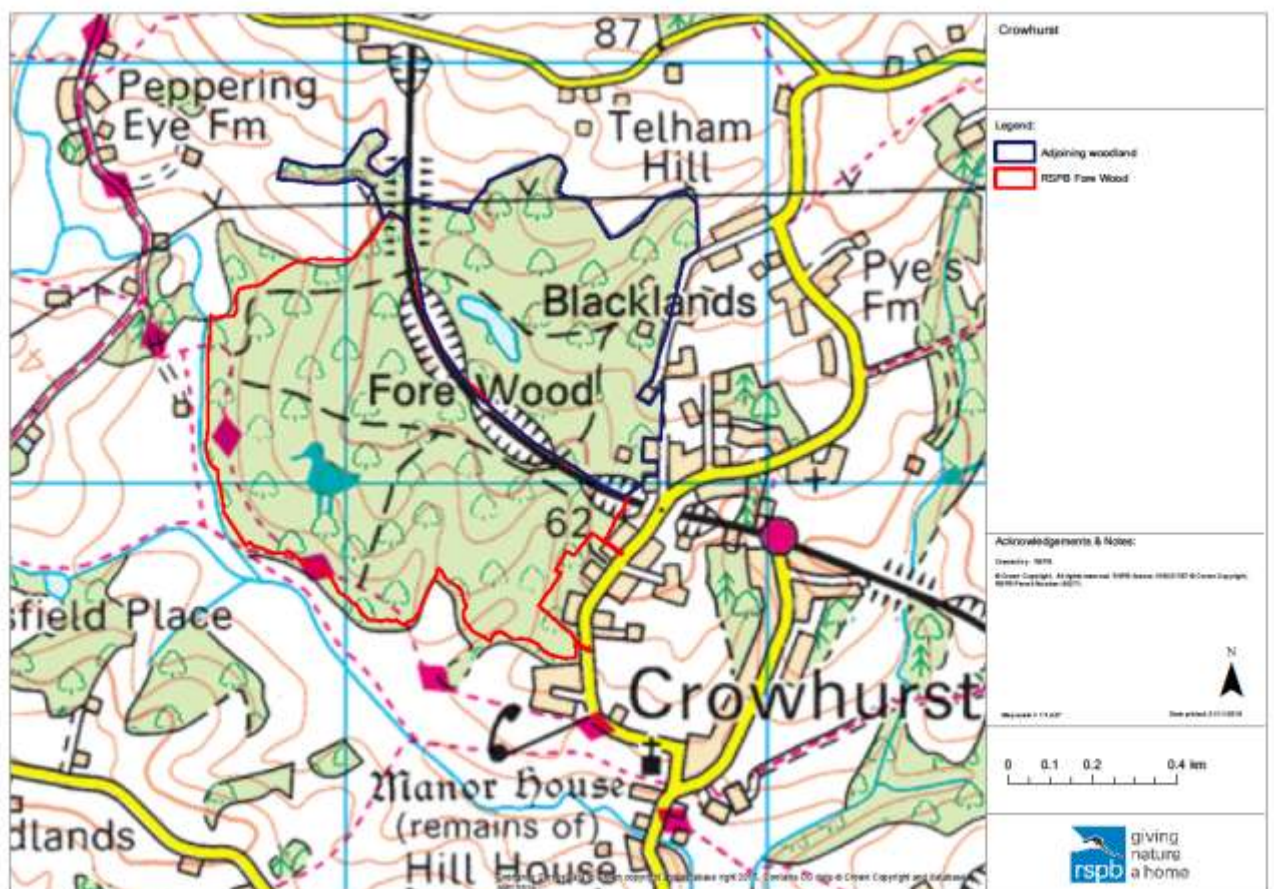
2.2 Significant Existing Local Wildlife Sites for connectivity and biodiversity include:

2.2a CR01 - **Woodland Complex at Buckholt Farm** (outside CP boundary)

2.2b CR18 - **Disused Railway**, Crowhurst (Grid reference 575952,112242)

2.2c CR29 - **Fore Wood**

<http://www.forewood.co.uk/theforewood.htm> and <https://www.rspb.org.uk/reserves-and-events/find-a-reserve/reserves-a-z/reserves-by-name/f/forewood/about.aspx>



ENV Map 7 Forewood RSPB Nature Reserve

2.2d Ha31 - **MARLINE VALLEY WOODS** (outside Crowhurst Parish boundary)

2.2e **Combe Haven** (Countryside Park) Rich in diversity

<http://combevalleycountrysidepark.com/park-history/finding-the-park> - Combe valley park

2.2f **Quarry Wood**

Crowhurst Nature Reserve is a four and a half acre (1.82 Hectares) community-owned woodland in Crowhurst (East Sussex), known locally as Quarry Wood. It was bought by the village for the village in 1999 to protect and preserve it. It is jointly managed by the *Crowhurst Society* and [Powdermill Trust](#).

The wood is located at the southern end of Crowhurst, on Sandrock Hill. Its history and shape are inextricably linked to the Crowhurst to Bexhill railway line, which ran through here from 1902 to 1964. Before then, the road had a more gentle curve, and there is still a little of the old lane just inside the gate on the left. It is likely that it was the construction of the railway that put the “quarry” into Quarry Wood, with significant sandstone blasting and earth-works required to accommodate the train track. At the southern-most boundary, the striking Victorian brick arch bridge is a reminder of the railway, and the route of the track is evident in the straight tree-lined corridor.

The Reserve is classed as a newly colonised wood, with most of the trees and plants establishing themselves after the closure of the railway and de-industrialisation, almost untouched since the 1960s. This makes it a remarkable case study in woodland development.

In the last eighteen years, the Reserve has been sensitively managed by a group of local volunteers: clearance to make it accessible and safe; creating pathways, benches and glades; nature-based community events; and an ongoing species-monitoring programme to gradually build the conservation portfolio. It has a highly regarded fernery and a rich diversity of fungi, the accredited moth list is growing, the pond is measured fortnightly, there is an Ash Die-back monitoring zone, and a new bird-watching area has been opened on the top tier.

Many different birds fill the woodland canopy, and there is a plethora of insects and pond life; there are resident rabbits, squirrels and badgers, and signs of foxes and deer passing through regularly.

Reference: <https://talesfromquarrywood.wordpress.com/about/> - Quarry Wood Nature Reserve

2.2g **Dismantled Railway Cutting** between Adams Farm Quarry Wood and Crowhurst Station

This provides an important corridor for wildlife.

2.2h **The Churchyard**

*The churchyard contains the **ancient yew** which is potentially the oldest living thing in Crowhurst; it has recently been nominated by the Woodland Trust as being among the top ten trees in the country. Other historic trees include other yews and oak trees, which provide home for bats, birds and insects. Many of the stones are rich in lichen and offer opportunities for lizards to bask in the sun. The wildflowers are pronounced in spring and in the wilder areas during summer.*

Reference: Yews, *Taxus baccata* L. at Crowhurst Churchyard in Sussex
The parish Church of St George, visit of May 2012
Toby Hindson and Lesley Elphick

2.2i Brakes Coppice and Wickes Coppice Reference: (Google maps 50.890872, 0.506690. Brakes Coppice Park. OS Reference 50*53'27.1"N. 0*30'27.1"E

2.2j Crowhurst Park and woodlands (including privately owned) Reference: Centre (Easting/Northing): 575446 / 111945 (NB map does not include Brakes Coppice)

2.2k Gardens These play an important part in wildlife connectivity. (Wildlife doesn't recognize boundaries).

2.2l Ponds

There are a large number of ponds in Crowhurst, some of which are difficult to identify as many are on private land. These are shown in a series of maps referenced below:

Reference: Parish online maps interconnecting enlarged. Map Centre (Easting/Northing): 575426 / 113371 and Map Centre (Easting/Northing): 577235 / 113504 and Map Centre (Easting/Northing): 574344 / 112123 and Map Centre (Easting/Northing): 576282 / 112121 and Map Centre (Easting/Northing): 578223 / 112136 and Map Centre (Easting/Northing): 574315 / 111030 and Map Centre (Easting/Northing): 576251 / 110887.

Reference ENV Pond Maps 1-7

All these have populations of birds, insects, mammals and amphibians.

2.2m Significant Trees.

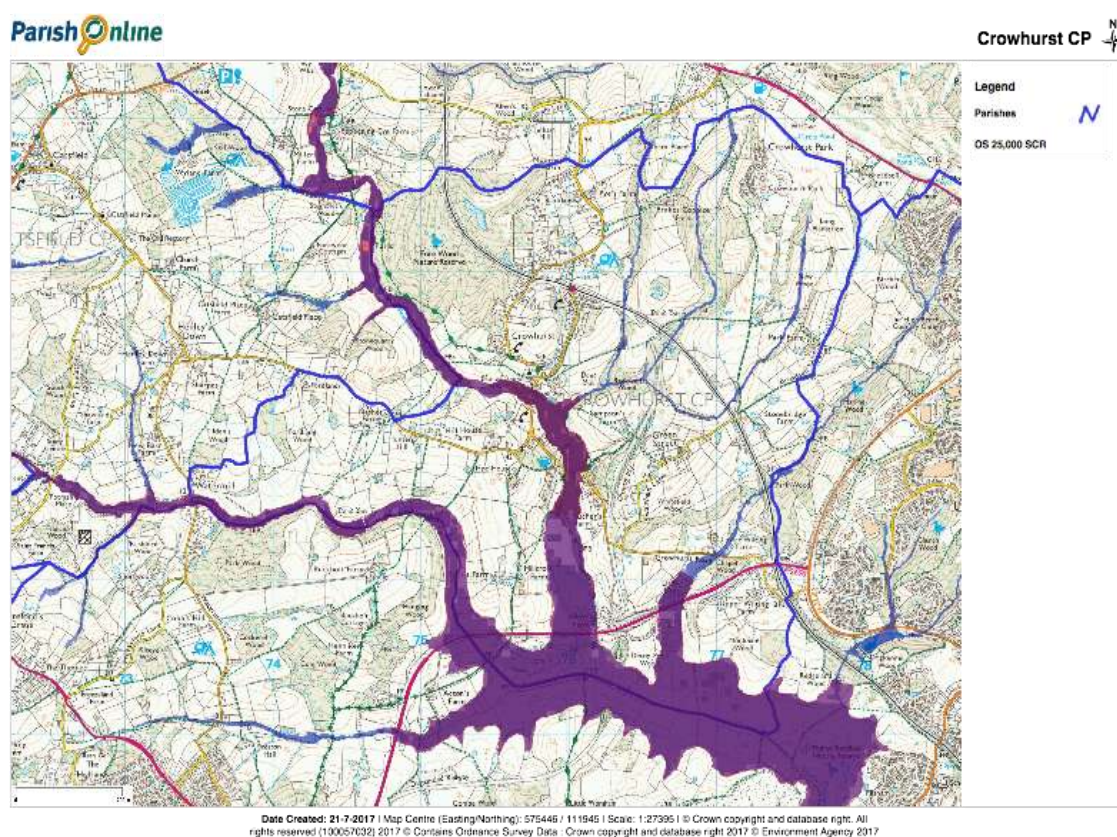
The Village has a number of significant trees which have been identified on the map below, on the Crowhurst Tree Record on page 32 and recorded on the attached photographs. E.g Ancient Yews in Churchyard, plane trees in the school, ancient oaks, ashes, field maples, beech and alders. Most roads and tracks across the village are lined with substantial trees, notably oaks. There is also a number of 'lone trees' in fields and on the village boundary.

Reference: Yews, *Taxus baccata* L. at Crowhurst Churchyard in Sussex
The parish Church of St George, visit of May 2012
Toby Hindson and Lesley Elphick, Sussex Biodiversity Report 2017. Map MF1 and Tree GMap 1 of significant trees attached.

2.2n Watercourses and Flooding.

A thorough and comprehensive report can be found in the Watercourses and Flooding Document prepared by Tracy Hoad, Crowhurst Flood Warden.

Two streams the Powdermill and Rackwell Streams run through the village. A third stream, Brokes Gill, runs parallel/behind Station Road.. There are waterfalls in both Rackwell wood and the Fore wood).



Parish Online Map Centre 575446/111945, Sussex Biodiversity Report 2017.

Watercourses and Flooding document Tracy Hoad in Supplementary Documents.

*The importance of **wildlife and connectivity** is a key recommendation in the DASA proposals (Section 10 Environment, 10.44).*

Key Environmental factors/characteristics are fundamental to the NP (*Reference: NP Resident Surveys 2016 and 2017*)

Reference: Parish Online Map Centre (Easting/Northing) 575446/111945

2.3 Proposed protected areas for Wildlife and Wildlife Corridors

Rare species have a much better chance if they can roam a wider area through “wildlife corridors”. National Trust Magazine Autumn 2017

Hedges, streams, ponds and waterfalls, road verges, disused and current railway line, public footpaths and old tracks, privately owned woodland such as Crowhurst Park, Brakes Coppice, ‘The Nightingale Wood’ on Chapel Hill, and the great many natural wildlife friendly gardens play an important part in providing wildlife corridors and connectivity to badgers, hedgehogs, voles, bats, dormice, other small mammals; snakes, reptiles, fish (eels, lampreys and brown trout) and amphibians (including crested newts)insects including demoiselle dragonflies and bees. *Reference Sussex Biodiversity Report 2017*

“small woods are connected to one another by historic features such as ancient hedge banks, sunken lanes, shows and wooded gills....These interconnected woods can sometimes have a greater concentration of wildlife than larger woods.”

Reference Woodlands in the Weald (High Weald ANOB Unit Guide 2014).

See ENV Map 5 in Section 2 Recommendations

Keeping a place for bees in Crowhurst

Crowhurst subscribes to the *National Pollinator Strategy 2014-2024* to help pollinating insects to thrive and survive.

Bees of all types, but especially honey and bumble varieties, should certainly be encouraged as part of a 21st century environment in our village. They are a key member of our community, performing – together with their cousins, solitary bees and wasps, also hover and other flies - an invaluable and essential service in pollinating many flowers, vegetables and fruit. Of course, they are also very pleasing and therapeutic insects to see in a garden or out in the countryside – and as a bonus honey bees produce delicious honey!

Today, bees, and especially honey bees, are under considerable threat: due to their industrious nature in visiting flowers for nectar, they can expose themselves to insecticides, often extensively applied by farmers (Crowhurst is fortunate in that the primary arable farmer locally, Bob West at Hillcroft Farm, tries hard to minimise damage and often informs local beekeepers prior to spraying).

Neonicotinoid-containing sprays or seed coatings (currently under a temporary ban in the EU) are particularly controversial, as they are applied to intensely-honeybee-attractive Oil Seed Rape plants when in flower (the familiar yellow fields in Spring and early Summer). Research is ongoing but many believe that these sprays damage bees' impressive navigational skills.

Loss of foraging habitat is another primary issue. In the interests of monoculture, agricultural sprays have often suppressed the wide kaleidoscope of British wild flowers seen 100 years ago. Only 3% of the country's traditional wild flower meadows are still believed to be in existence.

Honey bees are also under threat from Varroa mites, first reported in the UK in the early 1990s; these are now probably endemic in most colonies, although some strains of bee are believed to be evolving to be capable of coping with them. Mites do not actually kill bees but they can severely debilitate a colony and expose them to viruses such as Deformed Wing Virus and Chronic Bee Paralysis Virus.

A new and much more serious threat is the Asian Hornet, 50% of whose diet is formed of honey bees. These are already in France and the Channel Islands. Most unfortunately, a few of these insects have now been detected in the UK.

Reference: Tim Knaggs/Tom Masters, Crowhurst Apiarists. Dr John Feltwell: Asian Hornets

The value of verges (such as the wooded verge along the side of Station Road) should be recognised. This is a vital link between the various wooded areas of Crowhurst. In the verge can be found voles, hedgehogs, badgers and numerous bird and insect species.

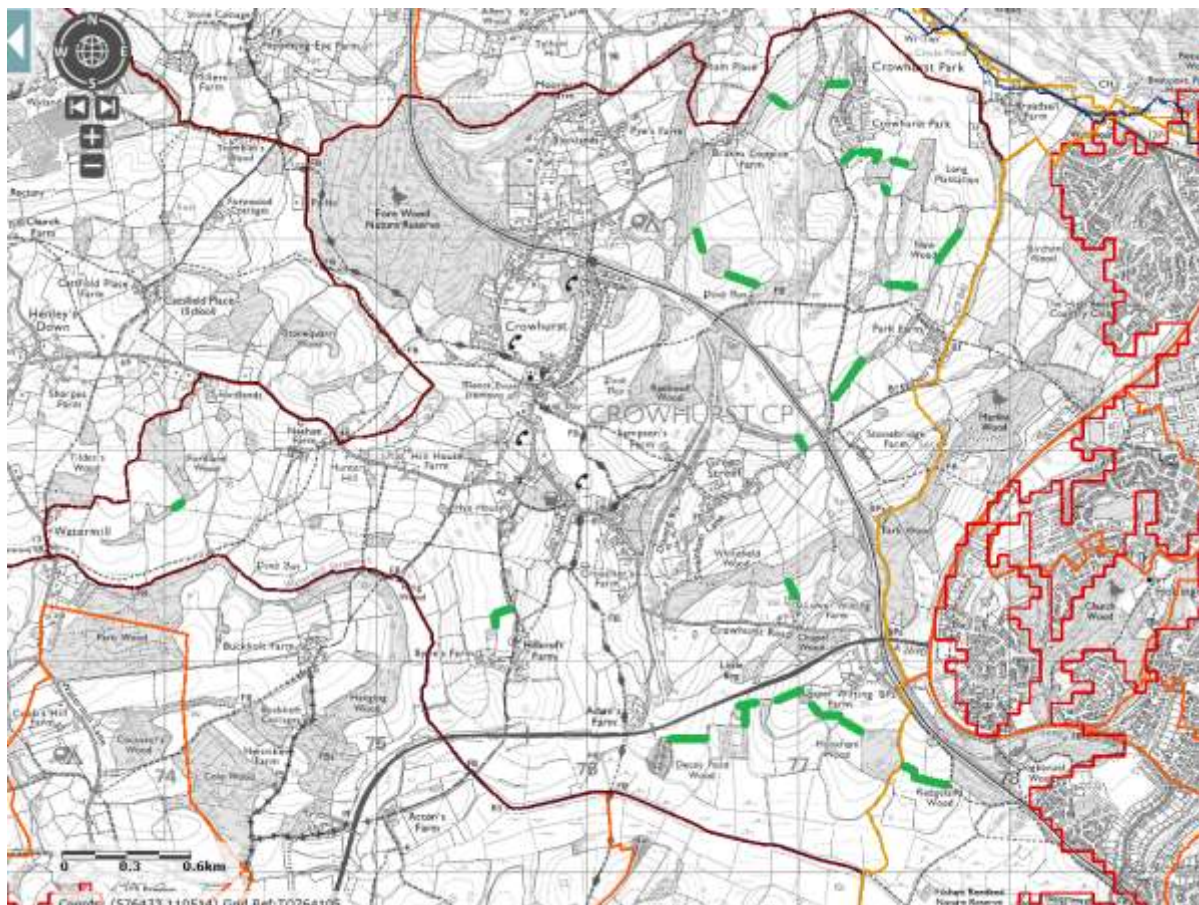
Section 2 Recommendations:

To monitor and advise local residents and development through the appointment of Pond, Tree and Combe Haven volunteer wardens, in addition to the already existing Footpath, Flood, Quarry Wood and RSPB volunteer wardens. Appoint a Crowhurst Wildlife Champion.

To seek tree preservation orders for the significant trees identified; to continue to do this over time.

“An environment-friendly policy towards bees should therefore be a primary aim of any village today. What can Crowhurst do to encourage them? A few suggestions are: To plant up wild flower spaces (seed packets can be found in many garden centres). To restrict garden sprays to a minimum – or even stop using them. To plant bee-friendly flowers, trees, shrubs and herbs. Examples are: Pussy Willow trees - their fluffy flowers are a wonderful source of early Spring pollen, Globular Buddleia shrubs are a summer magnet to honeybees, as are Lavender, Rosemary and Thyme herbs, while a stand of Michaelmas Daisies is a great assistance in late summer when other flowers have died away.” Tim Knaggs and Tom Masters, Crowhurst Apiarists

Green Corridors play an essential part in supporting biodiversity. The map below has been produced by Dr John Feltwell to indicate where these exist (any current woodland/hedges/verges etc – shown as grey on map) and where they ought to be introduced as part of an aspirational plan.



ENV Map 5 (Plan courtesy of magic.gov.uk)

The areas marked in green are areas that would connect current corridors (grey areas on map is woodland/hedges/verges etc) and where we see continuity of habitat should be maintained in the future; they generally follow field outlines and may already have hedgerows present. They have not been backed up with any field inspection at this stage. Where hedgerows are absent, we would seek to have them planted up with native species from a local provenance. The purpose of the green lines (and many others that may be indicated in future versions) is to maintain connectivity between woodlands in the parish (green corridors or green chains) so that wildlife can move through the parish. We would expect the planning authority to resist any removal of hedgerows in the parish vigorously in respect of the existing Hedgerow Regulations. We would also expect the planning authorities to make a plan-

ning condition for any planning for a site that abuts any hedgerow, or green corridor, to enhance said corridor with native species. This will assist biodiversity.

To establish a Crowhurst Environmental Group to maintain and build active links with wildlife and nature organisations such as Quarry Wood, Powdermill Trust, Sussex Wildlife Trust, RSPB, Combe Haven Countryside Park, Conservation Trust Volunteers, Bat Conservation Trust, Cliff Dean RX Birdlife, Dr John Feltwell, (environmentalist, biologist and author and Crowhurst and Catsfield Tree Warden).

- To ensure the use of porous boundaries in housing development and within the village encouraging the use of hedges rather than fences.
- To minimise the use of hard surfacing in gardens with porous parking surfaces wherever possible.
- The appointed Pond Warden to monitor and advise local residents on the value and maintenance of ponds.

3: A Farming Village

3.1 A number of medieval farmhouses and modern farms continue to play a significant and highly valued part in the life and identity of the village. Arable and grazing for sheep and cattle are still a feature. However, dairy farming no longer takes place. There are also some horse paddocks. Awareness and implementation of environmental good practice should be encouraged across all types of land use within the village.

Farms Ancient and Modern:

Adams Farm, Pye's Farm (medieval), Upper Wilting, Lower Wilting, Hillcroft, Court Lodge, Buckholt (just outside CP boundary), Sampson's (medieval) Croucher's (medieval), Park Farm, Decoy Farm, Acton's Farm, Nashes' Farm, Byne's Farm, Blackland's, Brake's Farm, Hye House Farm, Hill House Farm, Moorcroft Farm,

Farms currently in use for farming: Court Lodge, Hillcroft, Upper Wilting, Park Farm, Decoy Farm, Acton's Farm, Wheatcroft Farm.

Reference Appendix B Crowhurst Character and Heritage Assessment AECOM 2017 (1873 Survey Map)

Reference: Parish Online Map Centre 576004/111969

Section 3 Recommendations

Encourage dialogue with working farmers to explore ways of supporting and enhancing wild-life - for example, avoiding mono cultural farming practices leading to habitat loss; the use of pesticides and herbicides harmful to insects, birds, natural vegetation etcetera.

Where appropriate, to work with farmers to address flooding issues.

Reference: www.sciencemag.org/news/2017/05/where-have-all-insects-gone

4: Impact of development on rural features

4.1 At present, it is possible to walk along tracks and footpaths in several directions across the village and beyond, with minimal use of roads. The **lessons of the Link Road** need to be learned, with its impact on the long established routes out of the village, to the extent that some have been totally severed (eg Royal Oak Lane) while others have been urbanized by changes to the pre-existing landscape, putting in hard surfaces, sluices, fences and concrete bridges, and have become less rural.

4.2 Changes in the landscape have not only had a considerable **visual impact**, but also impact on **wildlife** connectivity and biodiversity with the removal of wildlife corridors, hedges and trees. Considerable disruption of dormice, bat, owl, fox, badger and newt populations occurred during the construction of the road, not to mention birds such as yellowhammers and lapwings.

4.3 Old and ancient tracks and footpaths are becoming **neglected and overgrown** in the Countryside Park in favour of the greenway.

Reference: Parish Online Map Centre 576004/111969

4.4 There have been noticeable increases in traffic noise, air and noise **pollution**, along with an increase in litter thrown from cars on the Link Road as well as by human traffic on footpaths.

Section 4 Recommendations

Any future plans should take account of the factors under 4.4, seeking not only to mitigate, but to improve the existing state of affairs.

Re-establish and provide additional footpaths, bridleways and cycle tracks.

Reference: Core Strategy Policy EN1; EN3; EN5.

That any development takes into account long established human and wildlife pathways and habitats, and where disruption occurs steps should be taken to mitigate this in an environmentally sensitive way.

Reference: Crowhurst NP Survey 2017.

5: Heritage and the environment

5.1 Legacy of farming and heritage sites include **several medieval farms**: Adams, Crouchers, Pyes Farm and Sampsons Farm. Bynes Farm, Hill Farm, Upper Wilting, Lower Wilting, Nashes Farm, Stonebridge Farm, Green Street Farm, Brakes Farm and Blacklands also appear on the 1873 map *Reference: Centre Maps Live, Crowhurst Heritage and Character Assessment.*

There are a number of **ancient tracks and roads** eg: Royal Oak Lane (an old drovers' road), Plough Lane, Coach Roads at Upper Wilting, Crowhurst Park carriage road to Court

Lodge Farm and the Pelham buckle Bridge, Green Street, Breadsell Lane, Peppering Eye Lane and Old Forewood Lane.

Reference 1873/4 map. Grid ref 575952,112242

5.2 The Church and churchyard provides a rich and longstanding environment for a wide range of fauna and flora.

Reference: Yews, Taxus baccata L. at Crowhurst Churchyard in Sussex The Parish Church of St George, visit of May 2012 by Toby Hindson and Lesley Elphick.

5.3 The Manor House and ruin

This historically important monument is integral to the character of the village and has significant visual impact in the landscape of Crowhurst. It also provides a rich and longstanding environment for a wide range of fauna and flora.

5.4 The School

The primary school is a listed building and is a core part of village life. There are two large plane trees of considerable age and aesthetic value and a yew tree in the school garden. It forms part of a hub for the community along with the Village Hall and the Church.

5.5 The Plough Inn

This distinctive Inn built in 1805 provides a visual and community focus for the southern approach to the village as well as being registered as a community asset.

5.6 Other Valued Buildings

These include Crowhurst Park, the Old Shoppe Cottage in Sampsons Lane, Wren House on Ballards Hill (a bakery), the old post office, the Watch and Powdermill Bank Cottages, Cherry Tree House (Avonside tea rooms), Powdermill, The Furnace, Springfields (tea garden), Blacksmiths Cottage, Squirrel Cottage, oast houses, Hye House Farm and dairy buildings and others.

See also Crowhurst NDP Historic Heritage Description para 2.6, Appendix A – Schedule of Heritage Assets – ESCC and The Keep (County Archive)

Section 5 Recommendations

- Continue to use the services of the Footpath Warden to monitor, protect and raise awareness of both designated and non designated footpaths. Maintain the accessibility of footpaths.
- To support this through the continuance of voluntary working parties.
- To support the ongoing use of buildings and services identified through designated organisations including Crowhurst Parish Council.

6: Connectivity and Fauna and Flora

In addition to the flora and fauna identified in the Sussex Wildlife Bio-diversity Report 2017, are the badgers and their ancient setts, amphibians, owls and other birds and bats that inhabit privately owned domestic and farm buildings and environs (*Reference: Core Strategy Policy EN5 and See 2.17*)

6.1 Sites and habitats

Statutory sites 3 SSSIs / 1 AONB / 1 LNR / 1 Country Park

Non-statutory sites 4 LWS / 1 LGS

Section 41 habitats 5 habitats

Ancient and/or gill woodland.

6.2 Protected and designated species

International designations 50 species 358 records

National designations 142 species 2,654 records

Other designations 345 species 4,586 records

Total 364 species 4,719 records

Invasive non-natives species 34 species 128 records

6.3 Woodland, shaws and gills

CR01 - Woodland Complex at Buckholt Farm (outside CP boundary)

CR18 - Disused Railway, Crowhurst

CR29 - Fore Wood

Ha31 - MARLINE VALLEY WOODS (outside CP boundary)

Local Geological Site (LGS) TQ71/38 - Marline Valley Woods, Hastings

Reference: Sussex Biodiversity Report, Cliff Dean records, RX Birdlife website

DASA proposal 10.44

Woodlands in the Weald High, Weald AONB Unit

Maps Parish Online Map Centre Easting/Northing 575446/111945

Section 6 Recommendations

The Neighbourhood Development Plan includes outlying areas and those bordering Crowhurst. (eg Marline Wood, Combe Haven are areas which are bounded by road 'barriers' (Queensway and the Link Road) within which Crowhurst provides a safe haven for wildlife.

Further links need to be added in order to join and enlarge green corridors as in Crowhurst Green Corridor Map in Section 2 Recommendations.

To support and encourage residents to plant and maintain garden hedges and wildlife friendly gardens, including the use of porous rather than hard surfaces.

7: Landscape

Crowhurst AONB is part of the **High Weald National Character Area** which “is an area of ancient countryside and one of the best surviving medieval landscapes in Northern Europe. The High Weald consists of a mixture of fields, small woodlands and farmsteads, connected by historic routeways, tracks and paths. Wildflower meadows are now rare, but prominent medieval patterns of small pasture fields enclosed by thick hedgerows and shows (narrow woodlands) remain fundamental to the character of the landscape.” Natural England NCA Profile: 122 High Weald (NE508)

Crowhurst is distinctive in its gentle hills, valleys, woodland and wooded gills with waterfalls and streams running through them. (The Powdermill, Rackwell and Watermill Streams, Brake’s Coppice and Crowhurst Park.). Some of these watercourses cause flooding and need to be managed.

There are extensive **views** across to the sea and towards Eastbourne and the South Downs (as painted by J.M.W. Turner).

There are many well used **public footpaths** which traverse Crowhurst parish and link it with the surrounding countryside, towns and villages. This includes the Bexhill branch of the 1066 Footpath.

Combe Haven marshland is rich in both wildlife and archaeological sites and is a recreational asset to the wider area. Wildfowl and flora and fauna abound.

The RSPB website says “**Fore Wood** is one of the best places for wildlife in the UK... a tranquil woodland of coppice and mature trees over narrow ghylls. This is a glorious and peaceful woodland with fascinating ‘ghylls’ - steep sided little ravines in the sandstone - where rare ferns grow. In spring the reserve is a mass of bluebells and wood anemones, with early purple orchids adding to the show. Many woodland birds are found here and in summer, butterflies such as silver washed fritillaries and white admirals, flutter around the paths and areas of coppice.”

In the latest version of the local Strategic Plan, Rother has proposed increasing the Strategic Gap to protect the eastern side of the Parish from development. However, they have also proposed removing the Strategic Gap designation to the north-west of Crowhurst between the village Battle/Telham. Further development, even small scale, in this area, could seriously erode the countryside gap between the settlements.

Reference: RXBirdlife website, Sussex Bio-diversity Report 2017

Parish Online Map Centre (Easting/Northing) 575620/110839

Flood risk management Reference EN6; DASA proposal DEN6, Appendix Watercourses and Watercourses and Flooding Tracy Hoad .

T. Hoad Crowhurst Flooding History. Parish Online Map Centre 575446/111945

Crowhurst commissioned Landscape Architect Report

Natural England: National Character Area Profile: 122 High Weald (NE508)

Footpath and bridleway map

www.eastsussex.gov.uk/leisureandtourism/countryside/rightsofway/map/map.aspx

Section 7.Recommendations

Views should not be impeded. Watercourses need to be maintained and flow freely; natural boundaries are also important for controlling flooding. Any building development should be sympathetic to the character and heritage of the village. *Reference Natural England, Natural Character Areas .*

The balance of wooded and open countryside should be maintained as in recommendations in Section 2.

Maintain the Rother District Council Strategic Gap designation to the north west of Crowhurst between Battle/Telham.

8: Housing Development and Sensitivity to Environmental Priorities

8.1 Traffic, parking and road safety. This has been raised as a high priority concern by residents. These were speeding, volume of traffic at pinch points such as school, church and recreation ground. Road safety concerns in areas such as Catsfield Road, Sandrock Hill, Chapel Hill, Station Road, Forewood Lane between Forewood Rise and upper railway 'California' bridge.

Road safety concerns include pedestrian safety, cyclist safety, visibility, lack of refuges and footways.

Reference NP Resident Survey 2017

8.2 Air pollution. Smooth traffic flow is important in maintaining low levels of air pollution. Air pollution includes building practices as well as careful choice of domestic fuel use.

8.3 Noise pollution

Noise pollution has been identified as a significant concern including that from building development, traffic, human activity.

8.4 Light pollution. Crowhurst is fortunate in benefitting from dark skies, which is rare in this part of the U.K. This is a benefit that residents have expressed a wish to protect.

Reference NP Public consultations notes 2016/2017. DASA 10.95

The wildlife of the parish is likely to be adversely affected by increased light and noise pollution including birds, nocturnal mammals and bats.

The bat population of Crowhurst includes several species of bat such as the common and soprano pipistrelles and brown long eared bats. The area creates a natural habitat for bats, so any development would need to take this into consideration. Potential light pollution from external lighting should be minimised in line with current building policy in any areas expected to be used by bats and that lighting should be low level, low wattage and be on for as short a time as possible.

Reference: Karen Hammond, Hastings Bat Hospital Registered BCT

8.5 Fly tipping

The increase in traffic and fly tipping was raised as a major concern by residents of all ages.

Reference: Surveys September 2016, July 2017, Consultations with school children and scouts November 2016, February 2017.

Reference Crowhurst Action Plan 2014-19

8.6 Awareness of invasive species and importance of natural gardens and trees.

Reference: Rother Core Strategy EN1

Section 8 Recommendations:

Any building should be sympathetic to the natural environment and in keeping with the character of the village in scale and design e.g. low rise. *Reference: Resident Survey July 2017*

Environmentally friendly building practices and materials should be a priority.

Reference: Core Strategy, Policies EN1, EN3

Encourage awareness, information sharing, monitoring, reporting and record keeping of environmental matters. To achieve this through educational and social activities with residents old and new using local knowledge, existing publications and websites and village organisations, including the proposed establishment of a Crowhurst Environment Group.

Energy provision should be in line with best practice and minimum negative environmental impact.

Any housing development should include a commitment to best practices to reduce air pollution both in their heating systems and in the building materials and practices.

To aim to keep additional noise and disruption to a minimum during building and as a consequence of development.

Although it is acknowledged that any new development is likely to increase light pollution to some extent, this should be kept to a minimum through good design and building practice.

References:

Cliff Dean, Bird records of Combe Haven, RX Birdlife Website Surveys, Quarry Wood to Adams Farm.

Ecological data search for land at Crowhurst Parish -Sussex Bio-diversity Record Centre. Report reference SxBRC/17/149 and Summary Report. Prepared on 09/06/2017

Footpath and bridleway map

www.eastsussex.gov.uk/leisureandtourism/countryside/rightsofway/map/map.aspx

Quarry Wood – Paul Johnson reports and those of the Powdermill Trust.

RSPB reports.

9: Fuel Poverty

People in rural areas pay almost 55% more for energy than those in more efficient urban homes. Older homes and no access to cheaper fuels like gas mean that residents rely on heating oil or electricity. People in rural areas without access to mains gas are more likely to be in fuel poverty. *Reference: Peter Smith, National Energy Action and the Campaign to Protect Rural England Research, The Observer 20.8.17.*

Section 9 Recommendation:

To raise awareness of fuel poverty and provide information and access to government and other grants and support in order to alleviate this among residents likely to experience fuel poverty.

10. Health and Wellbeing and the Natural Environment

In “A Review of Nature-based Interventions for Mental Health Care” commissioned by Natural England, Alan Law, Natural England’s Chief Strategy and Reform Officer, said:

‘This report highlights how **nature makes a real difference to the quality of people’s daily lives**. It shows what we can do to improve people’s wellbeing, working through new partnerships and offering new services.

There is now compelling evidence to show that contact with nature and the outdoors improves physical health and mental wellbeing. Natural England is committed to find ways to help more people access the benefits that come through practical experiences in the outdoors.’

It is essential that all EIA developments in the parish are in line with the 2017 EIA Regulations especially Regulation 26. The value of the natural environment in supporting and improving mental and physical health and wellbeing is widely recognised. The rural nature of Crowhurst can play a major part in the health and wellbeing of its residents.

Reference EIA 2017 Regulations

Section 10 Recommendations:

To raise awareness of the value of engaging with the natural environment through a range of activities and information. Reference :Tales of Quarry Wood, Crowhurst News and <https://talesfromquarrywood.wordpress.com/about/>

To ensure that developments respect this recommendation and work with us to value, preserve and enhance the rich biodiversity of Crowhurst Parish for its residents and future generations to come.

To provide additional multi-purpose facilities and equipment suitable for exercise and activities for residents of all ages.

Reference: Consultation with schoolchildren and Scouts and Student Survey November 16 and February 2017.

To provide additional outdoor facilities for exercise and activities suitable for young people in particular.

11: Enhancing our Environment

It is important that we take the opportunity provided by any new development to not only preserve, but enhance our environment through sensitive planning and design.

Section 11 Recommendations

Residents' opinion based on local knowledge and established practices should inform these developments.

To work with local residents and landowners, in partnership with local* and national wildlife and conservation charities, to seek available funding which aims to encourage biodiversity and make more of the village verges and other suitable sites. To encourage involvement in supporting wildlife. (*Quarry Wood, Crowhurst Society, Crowhurst Horticultural Society)

“Wildflower planting on any and all of the verges along the road either side around the village and on the banks by the church and Forewood Rise; a wild flower patch in the churchyard in a sunny spot; the verge on the corner of Ballard's Hill and around the triangle where the directions are sited; around the recreation ground. Wildflowers on the verges up Station Road owned by the Network Rail.”

Reference: Mary Boorman Chairperson, Crowhurst Horticultural Society. August 2017.

Green Corridors play an essential part in supporting biodiversity. A map has been produced by Dr John Feltwell to indicate where these exist and where they ought to be introduced as part of an aspirational plan. (See ENV map 5 in Section 2 Recommendations).

To raise awareness, monitor and take appropriate action regarding **invasive species** such as Japanese knotweed, Himalayan balsam, Spanish bluebells, mink, Asian hornets.

Reference: Sussex Wildlife Biodiversity Report 2017.

To raise awareness and monitor wildlife through regular guided tree and bird walks.

To encourage dialogue with working farmers with a view to exploring ways of supporting and enhancing wildlife and biodiversity.

Environment Description Summary

Section 1: Neighbourhood Plan (NP) and Surveys.

The Rother District council Core Strategy recognizes the importance of landscape stewardship (EN1), the importance of construction in harmony with the landscape setting (EN3) and supports biodiversity (EN5). Crowhurst is recognized as having good biodiversity (Sussex Wildlife Biodiversity Report 2017) and the Neighbourhood Development Plan Site Survey Report of 2017 (1:1) along with surveys of young people (1:2) show that local residents are strongly supportive of this.

Section 1 Recommendations

- Any development should encourage porous property boundaries and show awareness of significant plants, ponds and woodlands.
- Environmentally sensitive gardening and farming to be encouraged
- Any building should be sympathetic to its setting and be in scale and character with the village.

Section 2: Wildlife, Biodiversity and Connectivity – Area of environmental significance

Crowhurst is exceptional in having three sites of Special Scientific Interest inside, or adjoining the parish boundary: Combe Haven, Fore Wood and Marline Valley Woods. National wildlife groups such as the RSPB, National Trust and Sussex Wildlife Trust own or manage areas within the village. More locally Quarry Wood is jointly managed by the Crowhurst Society and the Powdermill Trust. Other local wildlife sites including those which remain privately owned are listed. The maintenance of these also have implications for flooding (2:16), the health of the bee population (2:17) and for providing wildlife corridors between the larger sites (2:17).

Section 2 Recommendations

- To monitor and advise local residents and development through the appointment of a voluntary Pond Warden and Combe Haven Voluntary Warden.
- Green Corridors play an essential part in supporting biodiversity. A map, produced by Dr John Feltwell has been included, to indicate where these exist and where they ought to be introduced as part of an aspirational plan. See ENV Map 5
- Maintain the existing voluntary Footpath, Quarry Wood, RSPB, Flood and Tree Wardens.
- To seek tree preservation orders for the significant trees identified. See Tree and Waterfall ENV Map 8 and ENV Map 9, representing an incomplete list of Crowhurst's trees proposed for TPOs in appendix as an ongoing work in progress.
- To plant up wild flower spaces on the verges.

- To establish a Crowhurst Environmental Group maintain and build active links with wildlife and nature organizations such as Quarry Wood, Powdermill Trust, Sussex Wildlife Trust, RSPB, Combe Haven Countryside Park, Conservation Trust Volunteers, Bat Conservation Trust, Cliff Dean RX Birdlife.

Section 3: A Farming Village

There are many farms (some with a long history) within Crowhurst and eight are wholly or partly in use at the moment for farming.

Section 3 Recommendations

- Encourage dialogue with working farmers to explore ways of supporting and enhancing wildlife. For example, avoiding mono cultural farming practices leading to habitat loss; the use of pesticides and herbicides harmful to insect, natural vegetation etc.
- Where appropriate, to work with farmers to address flooding issues.

Section 4: Impact of Development on Rural Features

The creation of the link road has urbanized part of the surrounding area with the putting in of hard surfaces, sluices and concrete bridges along with the disturbance of wildlife such as lapwings and dormice (4:1, 4:2). The creation of a new road has also resulted in an increase in litter and fly tipping (4.4)

Section 4 Recommendations

- Any development takes into account long established human and wildlife pathways.
- Where disruption occurs steps should be taken to mitigate this in an environmentally sensitive way.

Section 5: Heritage and the Environment

Crowhurst possesses a number of ancient tracks, drovers roads and roads along with at least three Medieval farms. The churchyard contains an ancient yew of national significance. Other valued buildings include the Church and Churchyard, the Manor House and Ruin, the School, the Plough Inn and several houses which used to be oast houses, shops or workshops.

Section 5 Recommendations

- Continue to use the services of the Footpath Warden.
- Maintain the tradition of voluntary footpath working parties.

- To support the ongoing use of buildings and services identified, through designated organisations including the Parish Council.

Section 6: Connectivity and Fauna and Flora

This section lists protected and designated species found within Crowhurst and on adjoining sites.

Section 6 Recommendations

- Any development should take into account that wildlife doesn't recognize parish boundaries and that they should remain porous and connected.
- Further links need to be added in order to join and enlarge green corridors (see map in Section 2 Recommendations).

Section 7: Landscape

Part of Crowhurst is a designated **area of outstanding natural beauty** (AONB). The High Weald National Character Area includes this. It is an area of ancient countryside and one of the best surviving medieval landscapes in Northern Europe according to Natural England.

Crowhurst has an attractive landscape with gentle hills, valleys and wooded gills. The Village has numerous springs and streams adding aesthetic value and connectivity. However, they are also responsible for flooding issues. (*Reference Watercourses and Flooding, Tracy Hoad Appendix*).

Rother District Council has proposed increasing the Strategic Gap to protect the eastern side of the Parish from development. However, they have also proposed removing the Strategic Gap designation to the north west of Crowhurst between the village Battle/Telham. Further development, even small scale, in this area, could seriously erode the countryside gap between the settlements.

There are extensive **views** to the sea and towards Eastbourne and the South Downs, as painted by JMW Turner when he visited Crowhurst Park.

Section 7 Recommendations

- Views should not be impeded.
- Watercourses, which are such a feature of the village should not be impeded and need to be maintained.
- Natural boundaries which alleviate flooding should be maintained and possibly increased in future development.
- Balance and connectivity of wooded and open countryside should be maintained as in recommendations in Section 2.

- Maintain the Strategic Gap designation to the North West of Crowhurst.

Section 8, Housing Development and Sensitivity to Environmental Priorities.

Crowhurst was not 'designed' with the modern combustion engine in mind and there are already issues about parking and congestion (8:1). Road safety and safety for pedestrians and cyclists are a concern as are air pollution (8:2), noise pollution (8:3), light pollution (8:4) fly tipping (8:5) and invasive species (8.6). All of these affect the quality of life for residents and damages wildlife.

Section 8 Recommendations

- Any building should be sympathetic to the natural environment and in keeping with the character of the village.
- Environmentally friendly building practices should be a priority.
- Encourage greater awareness of environmental matters through educational and social activities within the village. Continued use of existing publications, websites and village organizations to promote environmental concerns.
- **Energy provision** should be in line with best practice and minimum negative environmental impact.
- Housing developments to include measures to **minimize pollution**.
- Keep **noise and disruption** to a minimum during building works.
- Any necessary increase in lighting to **minimize light pollution**, through good design and building practice.

Section 9: Fuel Poverty

Rural homes pay almost 55% more for energy than those in efficient urban homes.

Section 9 Recommendations

- To raise awareness of fuel poverty and to provide information about grants and advice to alleviate this.

Section 10: Health and Wellbeing and the Natural Environment

The natural environment supports both physical and mental health. There is now compelling evidence to show that contact with nature and the outdoors improves physical health and mental wellbeing.

Section 10 Recommendations

- To raise awareness of the natural environment through village activities.
- Provide multi-purpose facilities and equipment to encourage exercise among all generations.
- To help more people access the benefits that come through practical experiences in the outdoors.

Section 11: Enhancing our Environment

Any development is used as an opportunity to **enhance** the local environment.

Section 11 Recommendations

- Encourage further biodiversity in any development. i.e. wildflower verges, linking existing green corridors to achieve connectivity across the parish and beyond.
- Deal with invasive species such as Spanish bluebells, Himalayan Balsam, Japanese Knotweed and the Asian Hornet.
- To raise awareness and monitor wildlife through regular guided bird and tree walks.
- To encourage dialogue with working farmers with a view to exploring ways of supporting and enhancing wildlife and biodiversity.

Concluding Comments

Crowhurst is a beautiful place with a rich natural history that offers benefits to all of its residents to enhance their physical and mental health. There is much that ought to be preserved as it is, but future development, if undertaken in line with this report, could both enhance and further the biodiversity and aesthetic appearance of the village.

Further references:

<http://www.forewood.co.uk/theforewood.htm> and <https://www.rspb.org.uk/reserves-and-events/find-a-reserve/reserves-a-z/reserves-by-name/f/forewood/about.aspx> -

Fore wood RSPB Nature Reserve

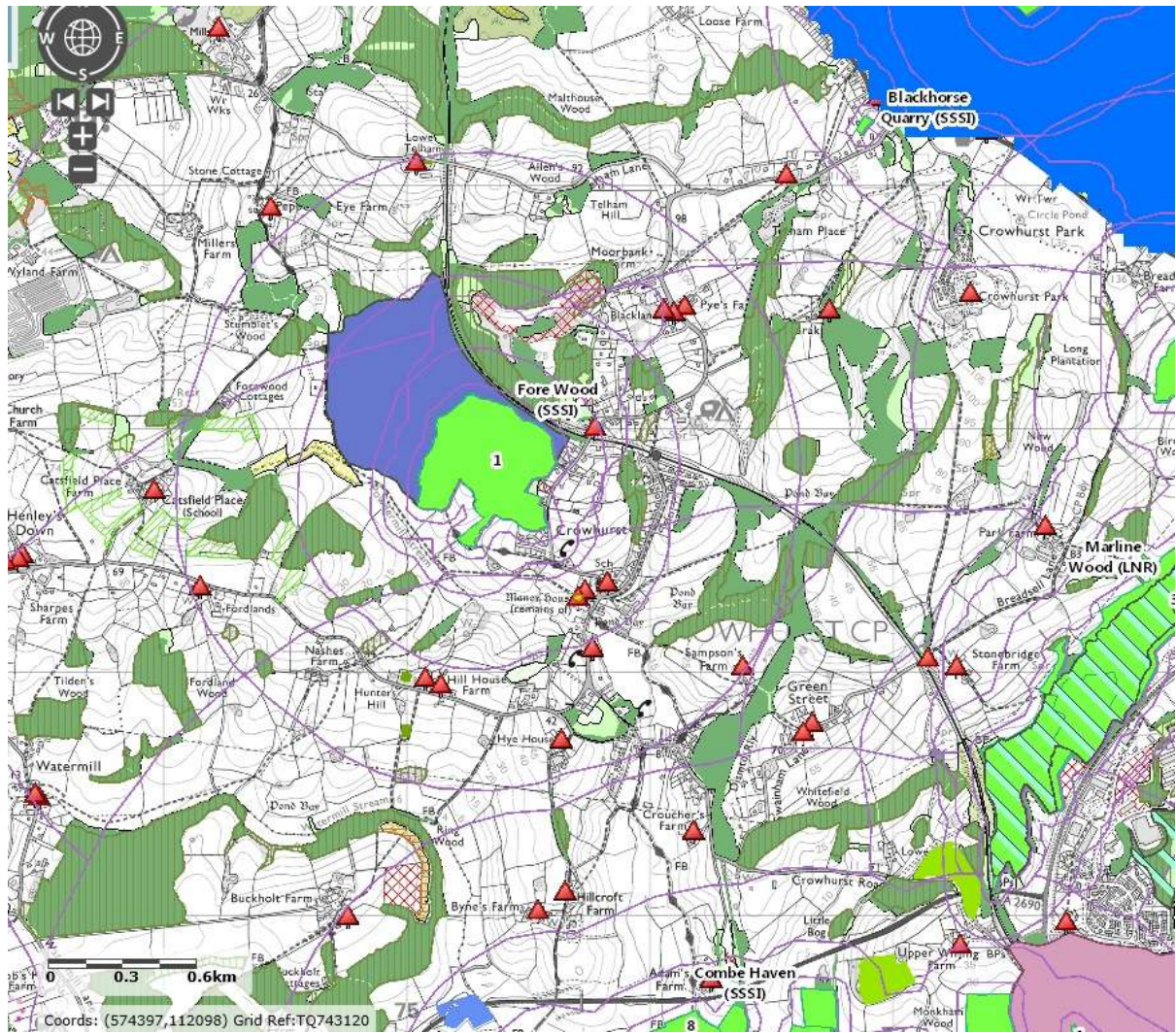
<http://combevalleycountrysidepark.com/park-history/finding-the-park> - Combe valley park

<https://talesfromquarrywood.wordpress.com/about/> - Quarry Wood Nature Reserve

<https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/bexhillhastingslinkroad/latest/>and <https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/leisureandtourism/countryside/rightsofway/rights-of-way-in-east-sussex/bexhill-hastings-greenway/>

List of Maps, Environmental Planning Checklist and Tree Preservation Order Record

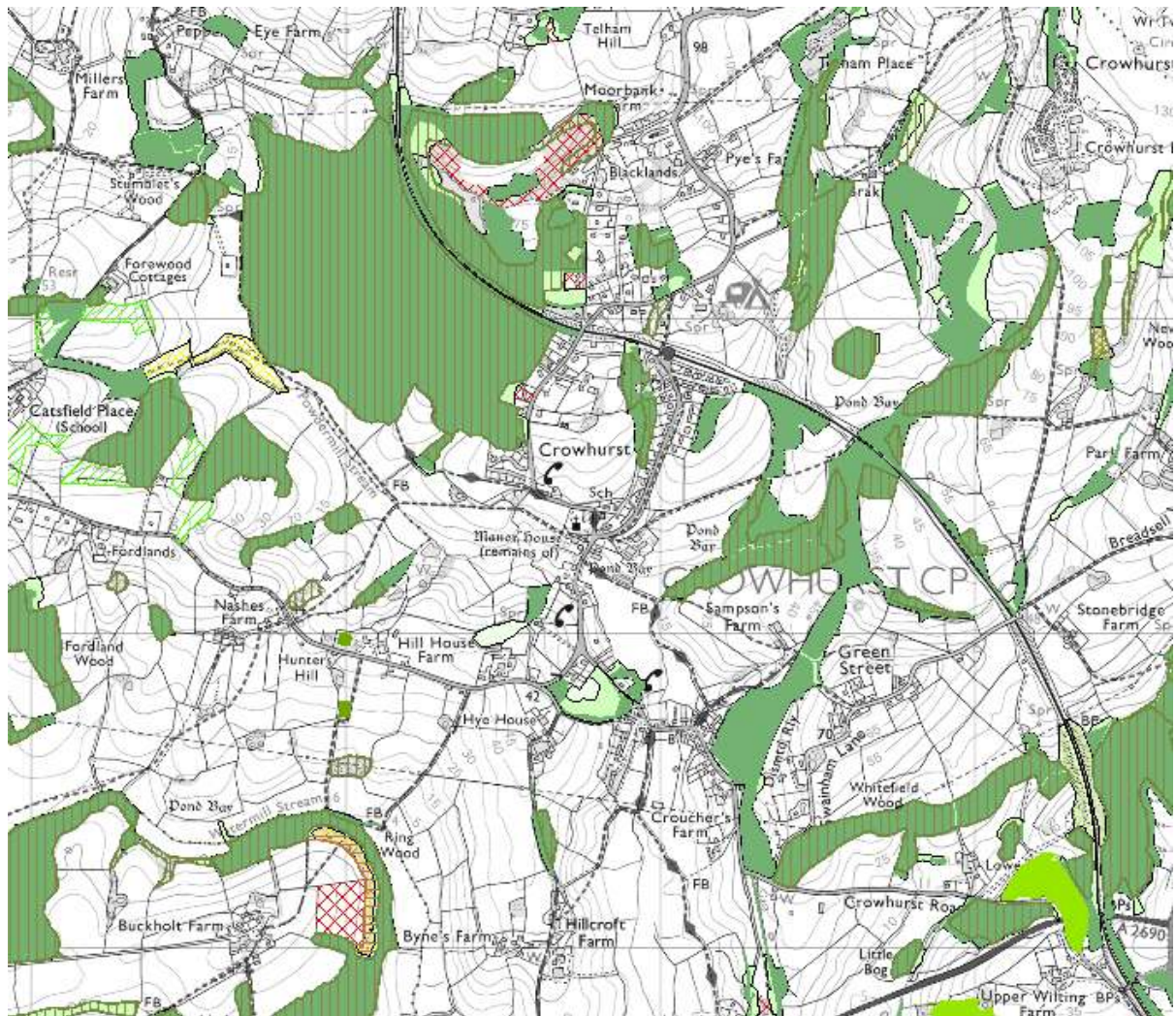
1. SSSI areas and Listed Buildings *ENV Map 1*
2. High Weald AONB *ENV Map 2*
3. Woodland in Crowhurst Parish *ENV Map 3*
4. Woodland and Gaps in Green Corridor Connectivity *ENV Map 4*
5. Gaps and Aspirational Green Corridor Connectivity *ENV Map 5*
6. Environmental Planning Checklist.
7. Initial list of Trees proposed for TPOs – an ongoing record.
8. Seven enlarged maps showing Ponds in Crowhurst Parish. *ENV Pond Maps 1-7*
9. Streams and Flood Plains *ENV Map 6*
10. Forewood RSPB Nature Reserve *ENV Map 7*
11. Some Trees and Waterfalls *ENV Map 8* of significance in local community history
12. Significant Trees *ENV Map 9*



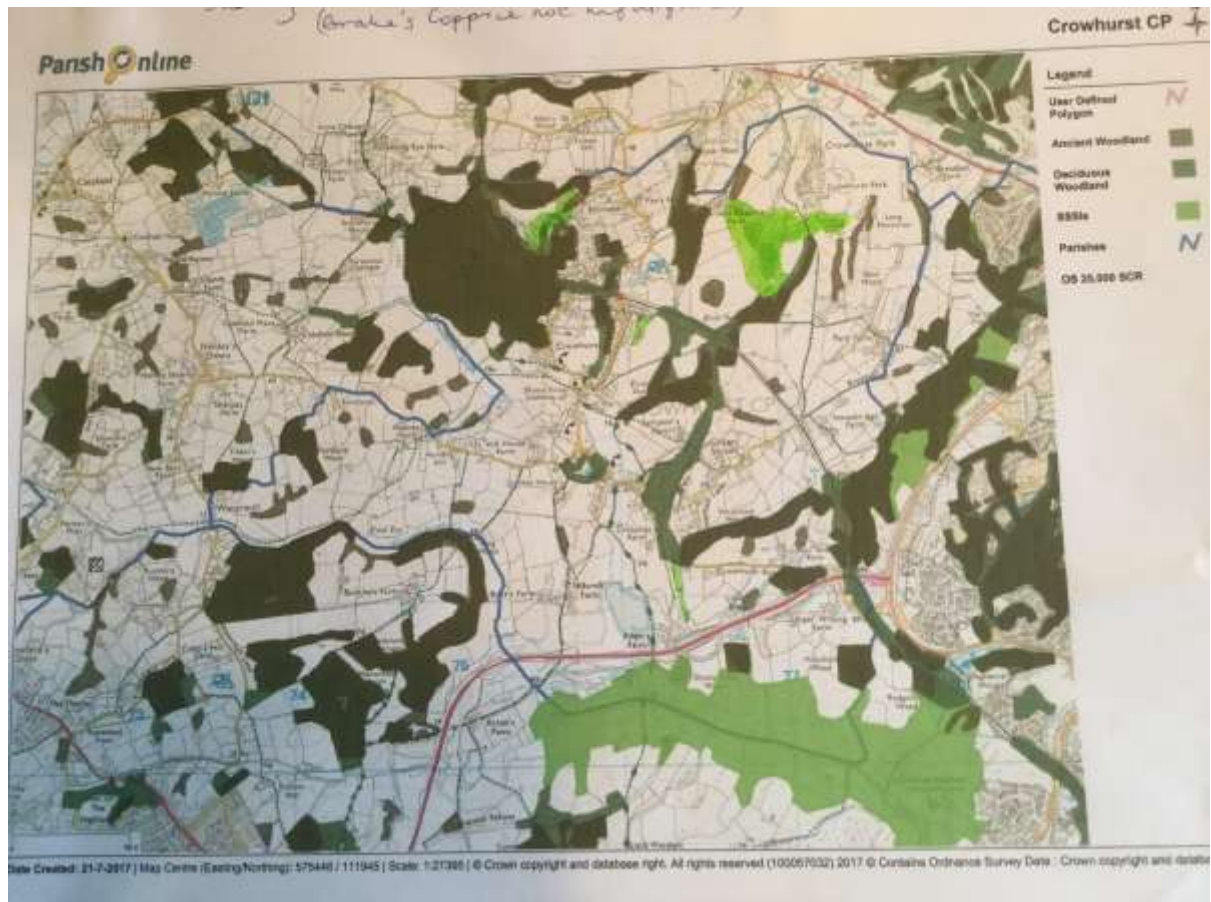
ENV Map 1 showing SSSI areas and listed buildings.



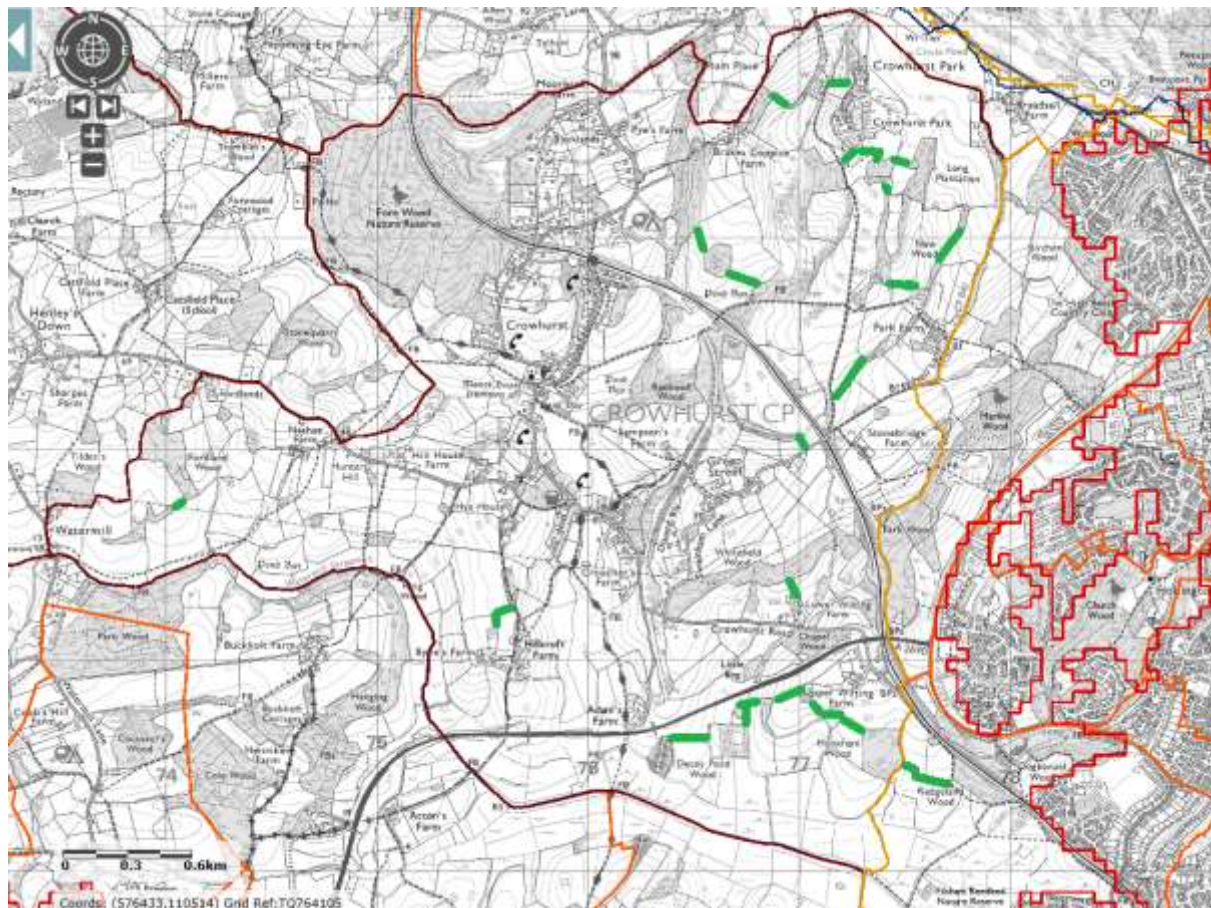
ENV Map 2 showing High Weald AONB designated area above blue line.



ENV Map 3 showing woodlands in the centre of Crowhurst parish.



ENV Map 4 showing ancient and deciduous woodland and gaps in green corridor connectivity
All shades of green signify existing woodland.



ENV Map 5 Gaps and Aspirational Green Corridor Connectivity:

Showing gaps in green corridors which relate to the Aspirational Plan for connectivity.
See Section 2 Recommendations

Environmental Planning Checklist

All Planning Applications to require a YES to all items listed below. The Applicant to include this template, and to state within the application how they have considered and addressed each item.

Conservation Items to be considered and appropriate actions to be taken	Yes	No
Parish Boundary intact (re. Ancient hedgerows, boundary markers, ditches)		
Ancient Hedgerows intact (often on parish boundaries)		
Hedgerow integrity (fill gaps with natives of local provenance)		
Ancient Woodlands intact?		
The Drove Road (no adverse impact?)		
Public Footpaths		
Bridleways		
Green Corridors		
Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) identified and respected?		
Strategic Gap (respected?)		
AONB		
SSSI		
Natural England's Natural Areas		
Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitats		
Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) species		
European Protected Species (EPS) newts, bats, hazel dormice, otters		
Environmental Priorities		
Local Plan proposals		
ESCC proposals		
Historical Conservation Areas		
British Standard BS42020 on Biodiversity – has it been followed?		
National Pollination Strategy (NPS) – has it been followed?		
Has there been an ecological gain from the development?		

On the following page is an **initial record of significant trees in Crowhurst** with the aim of registering them for Tree Preservation Orders as part of an ongoing record.

CROWHURST'S TREES

22 Sept 2017

Trees around the Church and Primary School

Number	English Name	Latin Name	Map Ref	Circ (cm)	Notes
1	Yew	<i>Taxus baccata</i>	TQ757123	920	The Historic Yew
2	Yew	<i>Taxus baccata</i>	TQ 757123	530	
3	Yew	<i>Taxus baccata</i>	TQ 757123	495	By main gate
4	Oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>	TQ 757123	212	Just o/s o/yard by gate to north
5	Oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>	TQ 757123	228	
6	Oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>	TQ 757123	204	4,5,6 are in a row (old h'row)
7	Oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>	TQ 757123	500	
8	Oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>	TQ 757123	390	
9	Oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>	TQ 757123	316	Just outside churchyard
School	Trees				
10	London Plane	<i>Platanus</i>	TQ758123	405	
11	London Plane	<i>Platanus</i>	TQ758123	388	
12	Yew	<i>Taxus baccata</i>	TQ758123	230	Next to old part of school
13	Yew	<i>Taxus baccata</i>	TQ758123	330	
Station	Road				
14	Ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	TQ758122	160	Bottom of road, southside
Cinderbrook field					
15	Field maple	<i>Acer campestre</i>	TQ759120	300	#5
AboveCinderbrook					
16	Oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>	TQ761120	400	#6
Sampsons Farm					
17	Oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>	TQ763199	?	On private land, but ?300cm
AlongSampsons Lane					
18	Oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>	TQ764119	210	Close to entrance to Sampson Farm
19	Oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>	TQ763118	249	Opposite to 'Private Woodlands'
20	Oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>	TQ762118	300	In 'Private Woodland'



ENV Map 8 Some Trees & waterfalls of significance in local community history

1 Waterfalls in Forewood and in Rackwell Wood.

2 'Old Faithfull' Oak Tree in Forewood

3 'Big Beech' in Forewood

4 Churchyard Yew Trees and 3 Oak Trees. School yard 2 Plane Trees

5 Field Maple in Cinderbrook field.

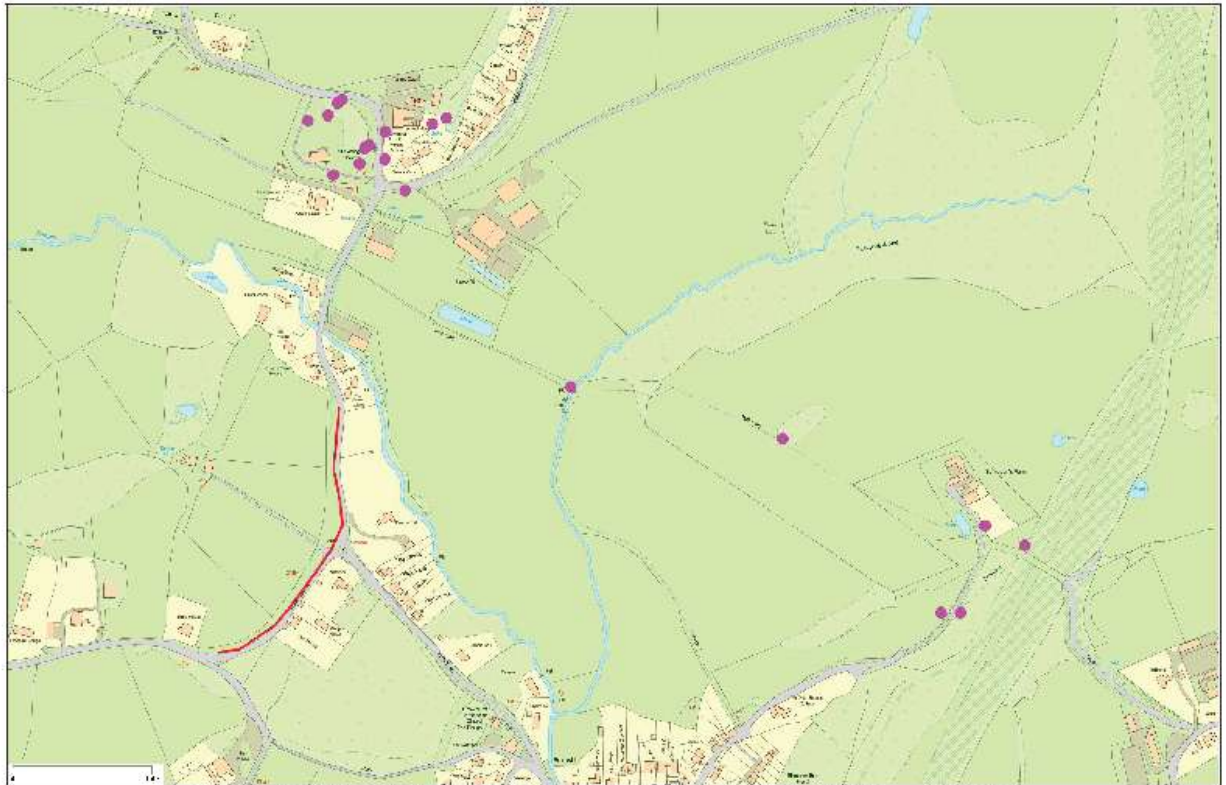
6 Oak Tree in ploughed field next to pond above Cinderbrook

7 Oak Tree

8 Oak Tree

9 Oak Tree

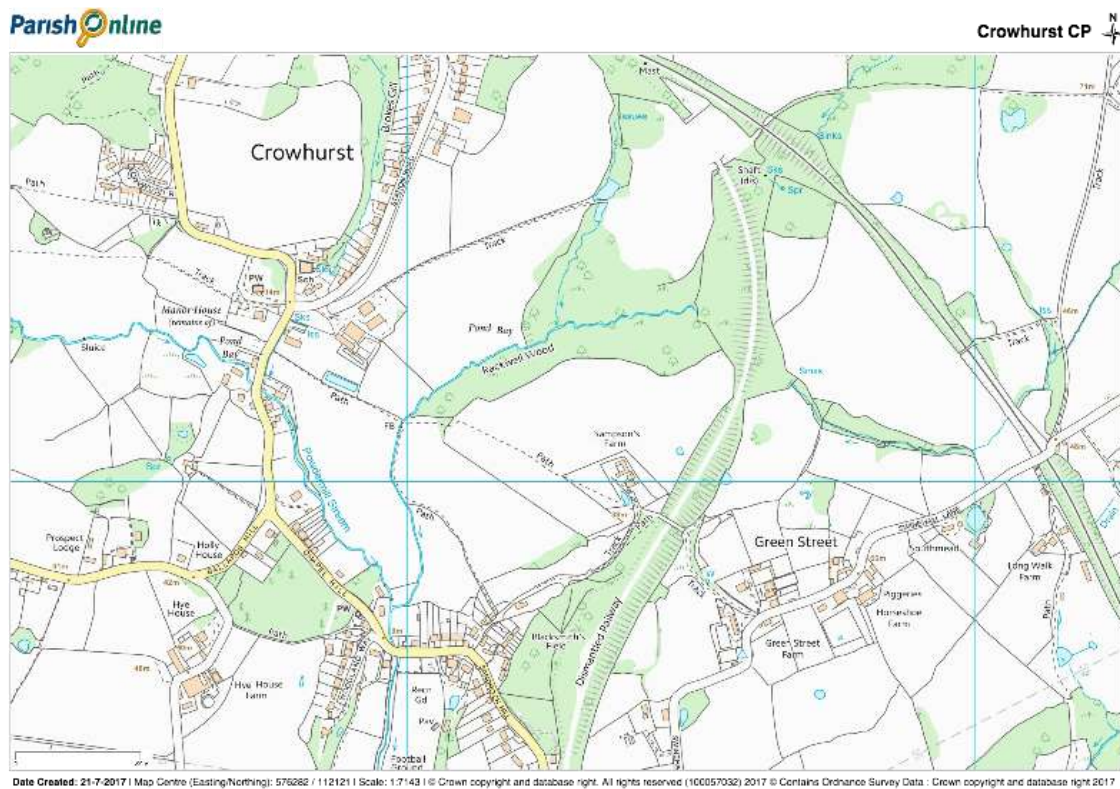
10 Oak Tree, Swainham Lane



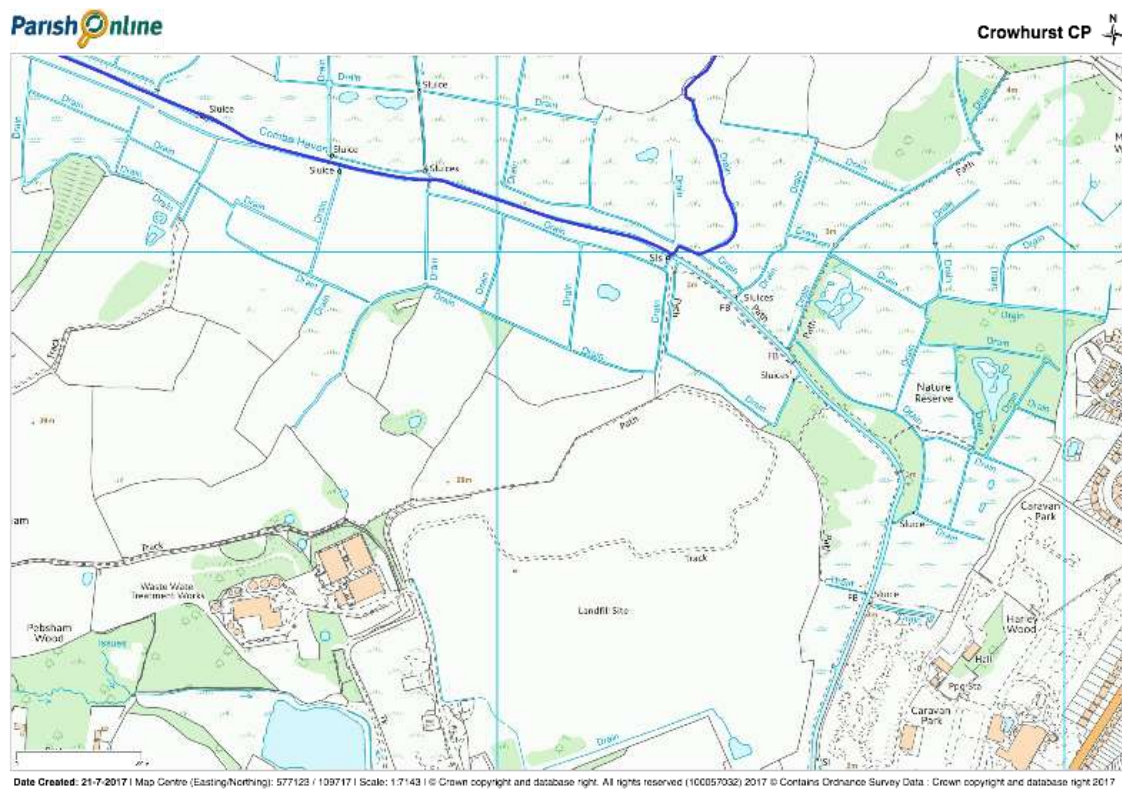
ENV Map 9 – Significant Trees

PONDS

Seven enlarged maps showing ponds in Crowhurst Parish. Boundary is shown in blue.



ENV Pond Map 1 Village Centre

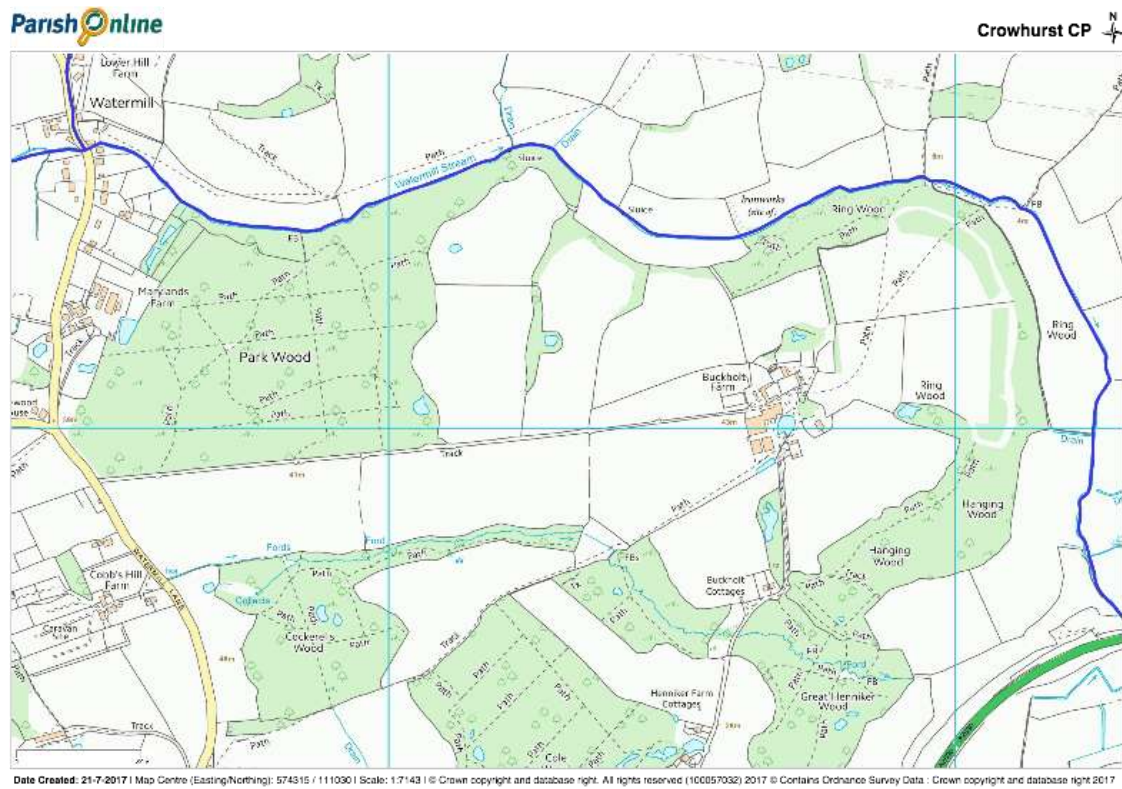


ENV Pond Map 2 South-east boundary

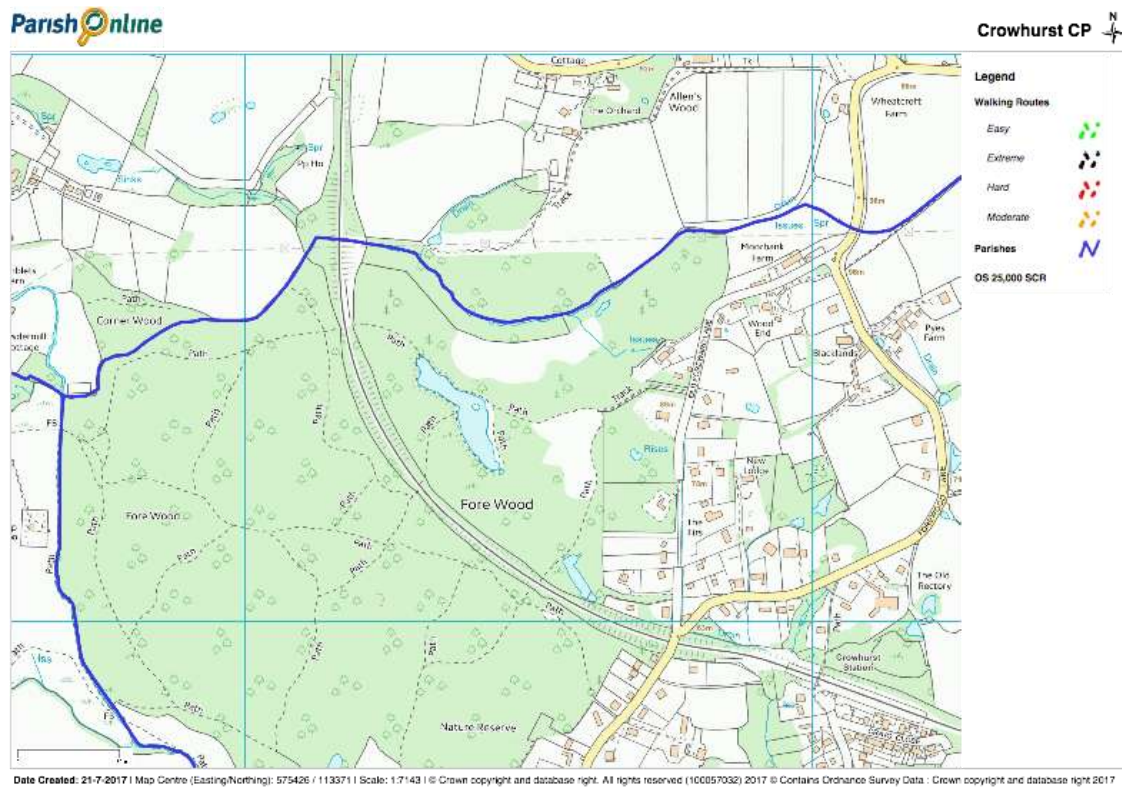


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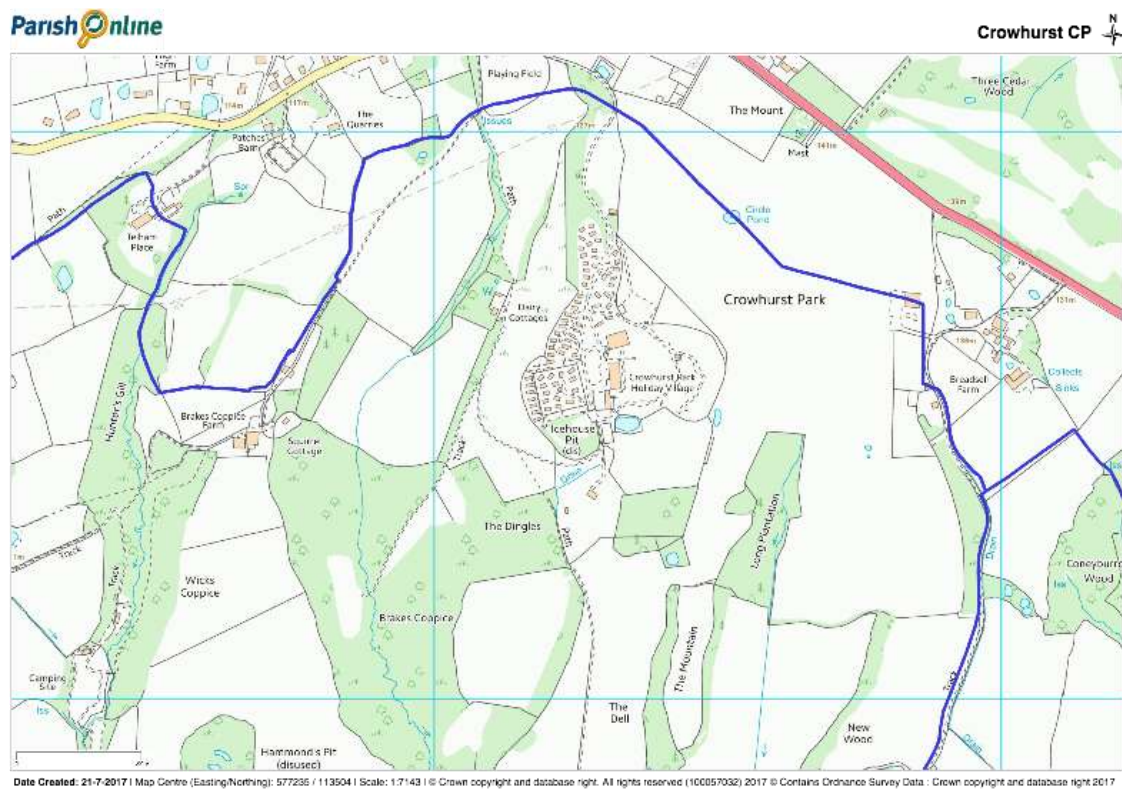
ENV Pond Map 3 Southern boundary



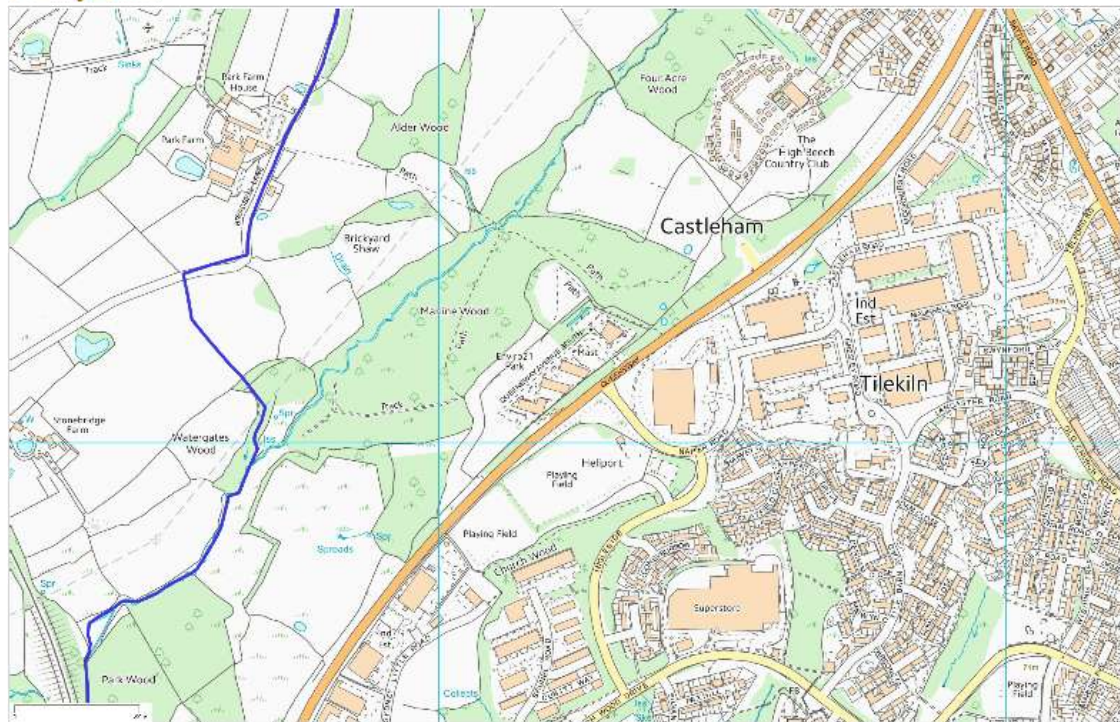
ENV Pond Map 4 South-western boundary



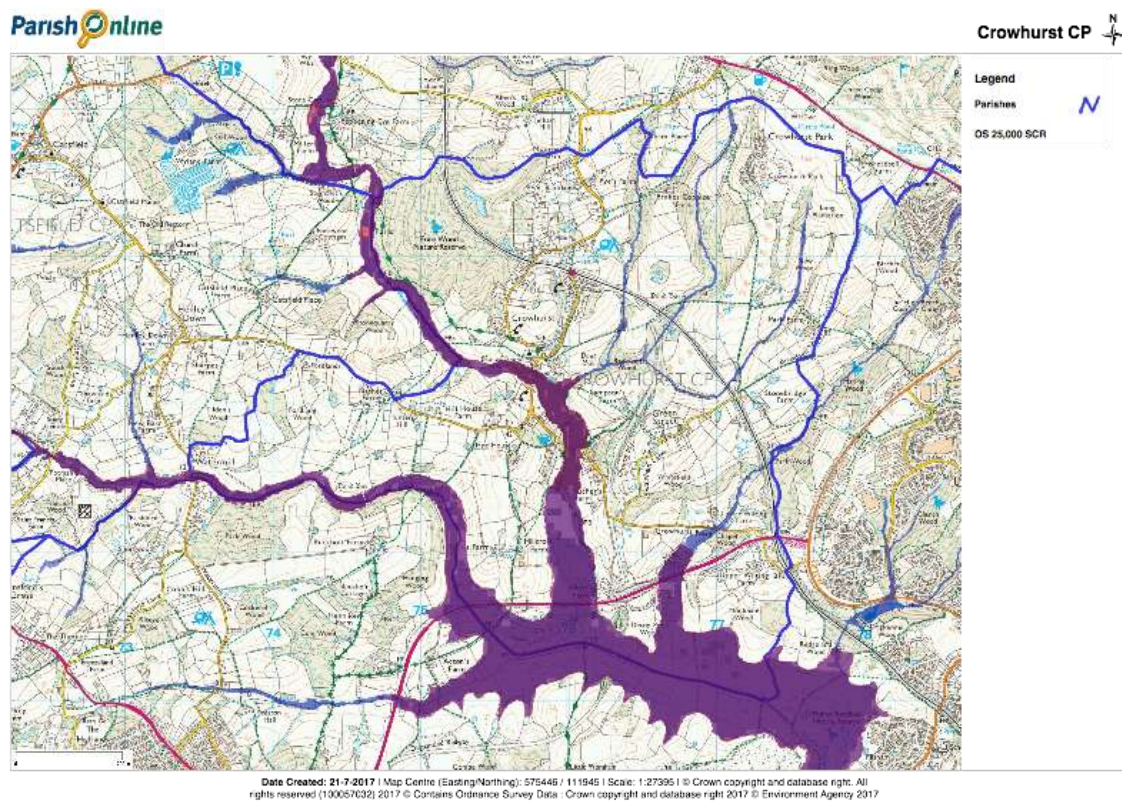
ENV Pond Map 5 North-western boundary



ENV Pond Map 6 North-eastern boundary



ENV Pond Map 7 Eastern boundary



ENV Map 6 showing streams and flood plains

14: Glossary

AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
BAP	Biodiversity Action Plan
BCT	Bat Conservation Trust
DEFRA	Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
ENFM	Environment National Flood Management team
ESCC	East Sussex County Council
EU	European Union
LLFA	Lead Local Flood Authority
NP	Neighbourhood Plan (Neighbourhood Development Plan)
NPS	National Pollination Strategy
RDC	Rother District Council
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
SEA Directive	Strategic Environmental Directive
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
SFRA	Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
SUDS	Sustainable Drainage Systems
Tor	Terms of Reference
TPO	Tree Protection Order