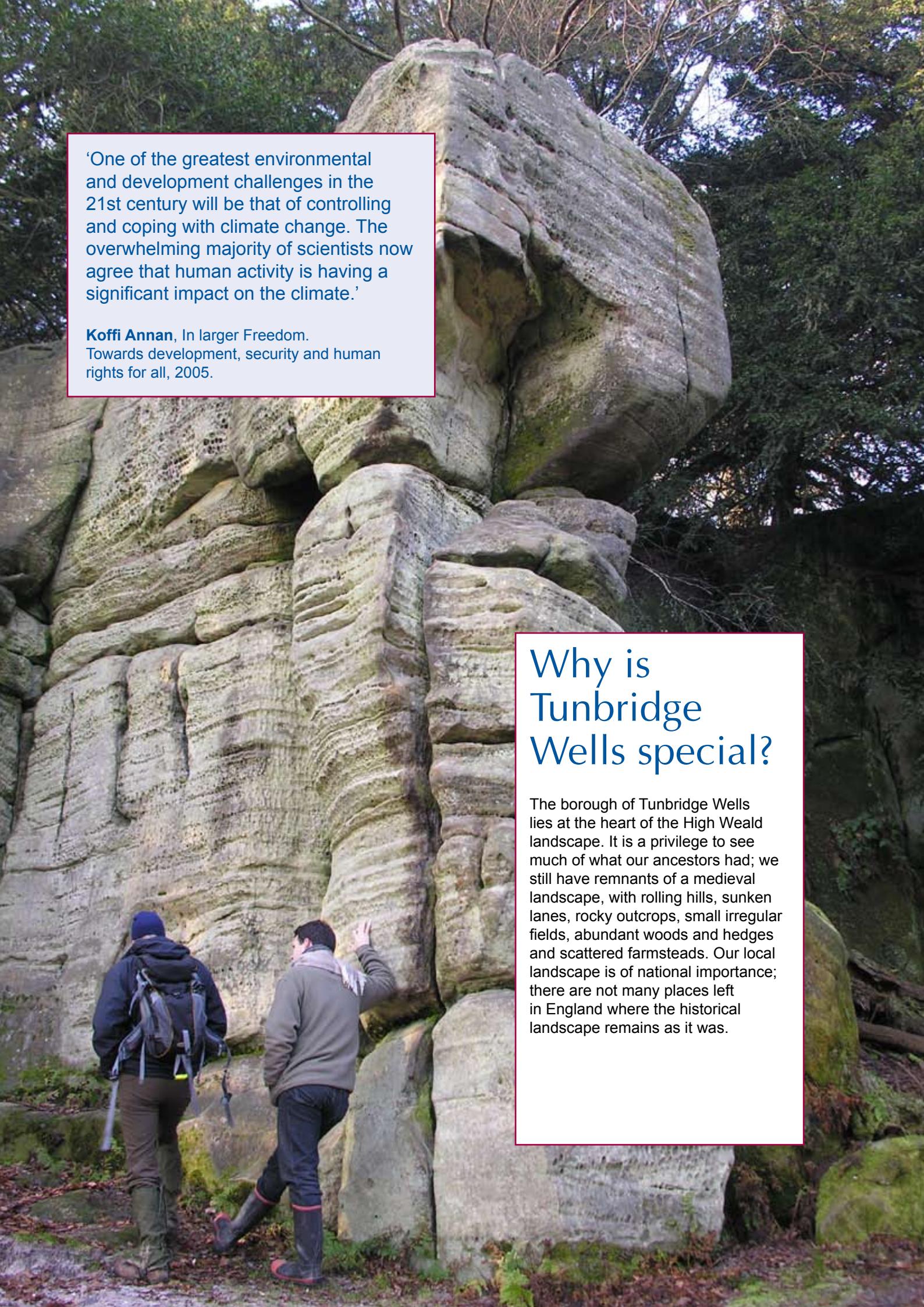


# Tunbridge Wells Local Biodiversity Action Plan

Part 1 – Habitats  
October 2008





'One of the greatest environmental and development challenges in the 21st century will be that of controlling and coping with climate change. The overwhelming majority of scientists now agree that human activity is having a significant impact on the climate.'

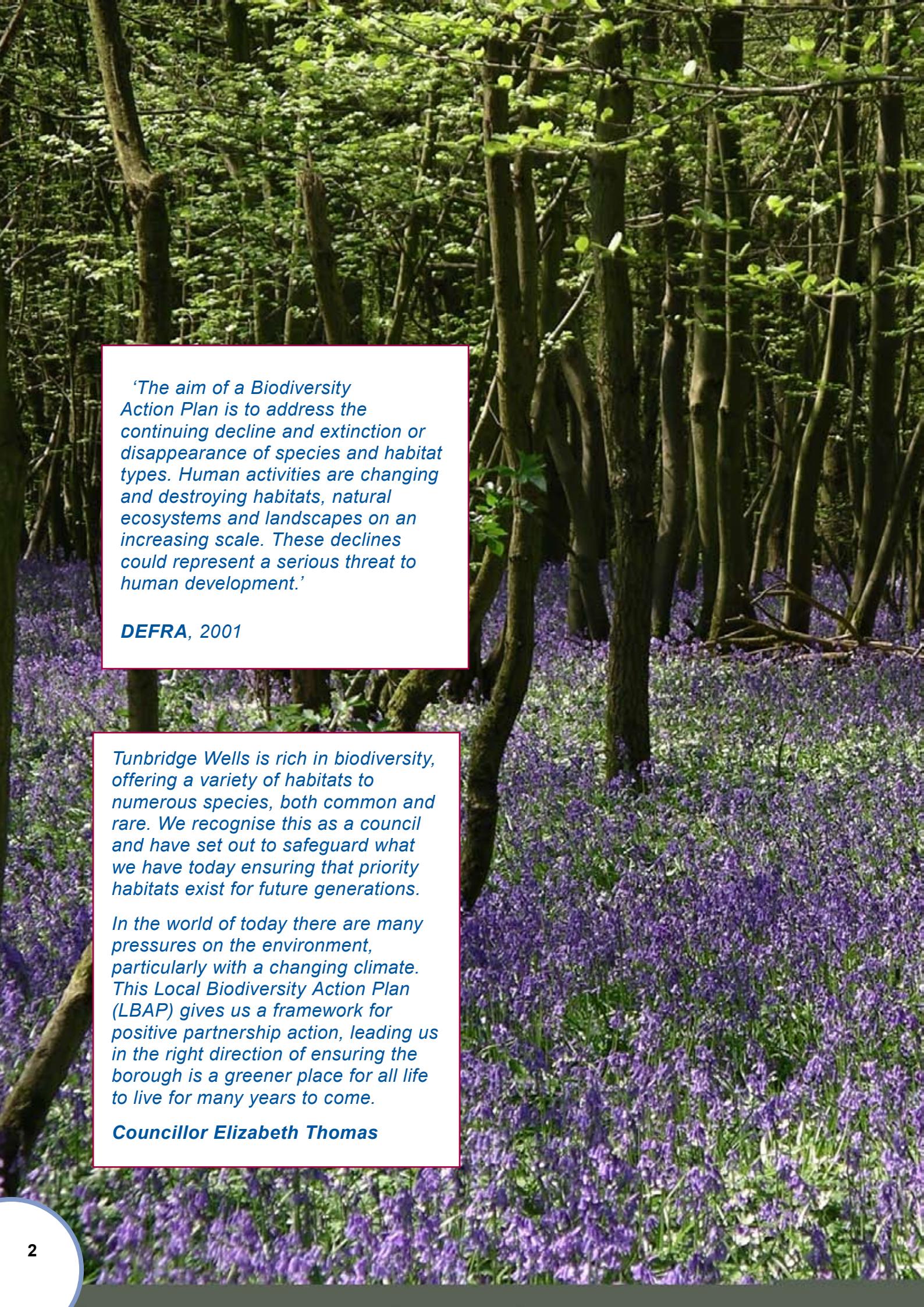
**Kofi Annan**, In Larger Freedom.  
Towards development, security and human rights for all, 2005.

## Why is Tunbridge Wells special?

The borough of Tunbridge Wells lies at the heart of the High Weald landscape. It is a privilege to see much of what our ancestors had; we still have remnants of a medieval landscape, with rolling hills, sunken lanes, rocky outcrops, small irregular fields, abundant woods and hedges and scattered farmsteads. Our local landscape is of national importance; there are not many places left in England where the historical landscape remains as it was.

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The background image shows a dense forest scene. In the foreground, the ground is carpeted with numerous small, vibrant purple flowers, identified as bluebells. Behind them, the forest floor is covered with green grass and other low-growing plants. The upper portion of the image is filled with the dark trunks and branches of tall trees, some of which have thin, light-colored vines or ivy growing on them. A faint wire fence is visible in the distance.

*'The aim of a Biodiversity Action Plan is to address the continuing decline and extinction or disappearance of species and habitat types. Human activities are changing and destroying habitats, natural ecosystems and landscapes on an increasing scale. These declines could represent a serious threat to human development.'*

**DEFRA, 2001**

*Tunbridge Wells is rich in biodiversity, offering a variety of habitats to numerous species, both common and rare. We recognise this as a council and have set out to safeguard what we have today ensuring that priority habitats exist for future generations.*

*In the world of today there are many pressures on the environment, particularly with a changing climate. This Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) gives us a framework for positive partnership action, leading us in the right direction of ensuring the borough is a greener place for all life to live for many years to come.*

**Councillor Elizabeth Thomas**

# INTRODUCTION

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## What is biodiversity and why is it important?

Biodiversity is best described as the 'variety of life'. It is not just about the 'most rare' species, but also about all of the animals, birds, insects and plants that make up our environment.



© Thrush by Steve Smith

### Protection of natural environment

The natural environment is facing many threats, such as climate change and changing agricultural practices. The natural environment provides the clean air, fresh water and food that we depend upon to survive. It is essential that we care for our environment and protect it, in order that life on earth is able to continue.

### Education and increasing scientific knowledge

There still remains many aspects of our environment that we do not fully understand and, by protecting biodiversity, we ensure that we are able to continue to expand our scientific knowledge and level of understanding.

### Increasing community involvement

The protection of our surrounding environment through conservation activities gives great opportunity to individuals to get involved with their local community and often works to bring communities together.

### Boosting local economy

Acknowledging and making use of biodiversity and local distinctiveness can contribute to the local economy, such as through 'green tourism', local jobs and promotion of traditional crafts such as wood products and as a renewable energy eg biomass.

### Health and cultural life

By protecting biodiversity, we keep our ecosystems healthy. This in turn will reduce diseases and pests caused by problems such as pollution. A healthy environment also helps to support a healthy community living within it, with opportunities for outdoor recreation and a sense of cultural identity.

# Where does the Biodiversity Action Plan come from?

The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP) was first published by national government in 1994. This was a response to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, from the Earth Summit in 1992. Our government, along with many others around the world, committed to supporting this convention, in order to prevent the worldwide decline of habitats and extinction of species.

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council has already produced five borough documents setting out some commitment including making it a corporate priority, to the conservation of the biodiversity within the borough:

- Corporate priority.
- Sustainable Community Plan, 2006–2011.
- Environment Strategy, 2005–2010.
- The Borough Local Plan, adopted 2006.
- The Borough Landscape Character Area Assessment, 2002.
- Specific policies on biodiversity will also be included in the emerging development plan for Tunbridge Wells, referred to as the Local Development Framework (LDF).

Furthermore, we are committed to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan, 2004, which covers a large area within our borough and goes some way to protecting our landscape.

# Kent Biodiversity Action Plan

Shortly after the UK HAPs were drawn up, regional bodies formed partnerships to take forward action to conserve habitats at a more local level. The Kent Biodiversity Action Plan was first launched by Kent County Council in 1997 and fully reviewed in 2005. It describes species and habitats in Kent that are significant on a regional, national or international scale and in need of protection. Of the 45 priority L'HAPs in the UK BAP, 28 of them are exhibited in Kent. It gives targets for their protection and also outlines projects that will increase the population of species and increase the quality and quantity of habitats.

# Tunbridge Wells Borough Biodiversity Action Plan

The Tunbridge Wells Borough Biodiversity Action Plan has been produced in response to the need to promote and carry out positive action for the conservation and enhancement for our local biodiversity.

The Plan contains individual habitat and species action plans to help safeguard Tunbridge Wells borough's biodiversity, now and for the future. Nationally threatened habitats and species that occur in Tunbridge Wells borough are included, but more importantly you will find action plans for species and habitats of local significance; whether common, rare or threatened.

Targeting of biodiversity action enables biodiversity to adapt to climate change, as well as continuing to focus on vulnerable species in appropriate locations.

# Aim of the Plan

To conserve, protect and enhance the biodiversity of Tunbridge Wells borough for current and future generations.

## Lifespan of the Plan

It is intended that this Plan is a living, flexible document that is readily adaptable with SMART targets (Specific, Measurable, Achievable and Realistic time band). The Plan will have five years of actions and these will be reviewed on an annual basis. One of the actions of this Plan is to set up a partnership group who will carry out this review.

## Our Statutory Duty

Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act, 2006 (NERC Act, 2006) states that 'every public authority must, in exercising its function, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.'

Part III of the Countryside and Wildlife Act, 2000 (CROW Act, 2000) provides the following statutory basis for biodiversity conservation in England:

- It places a statutory duty for government departments to have regard to the purpose of conserving biological diversity, in exercising their functions.
- It requires the publication and maintenance of lists of the most important species and habitat types for conservation.
- It specifies the Secretary of State to further the conservation of the most important habitat types and species and to further such steps by others.

The Tunbridge Wells Borough Biodiversity Action will, however, be a living document to ensure the conservation of our local biodiversity.

## Objectives of the Plan

- To improve our knowledge of what habitats and species we have, their current condition, the extent and population.
- To identify habitat and species that are of national and local importance in Tunbridge Wells borough.
- To identify threats and opportunities to habitats and species within the borough.
- To develop targets and actions to protect and enhance Tunbridge Wells borough biodiversity.
- To form a biodiversity partnership to bring together all action taking place for biodiversity in Tunbridge Wells borough.
- To increase public understanding and awareness of biodiversity conservation.
- To promote the long-term protection and enhancement of biodiversity in Tunbridge Wells borough.
- To target biodiversity action to enable biodiversity to adapt to climate change.
- To raise understanding and awareness of biodiversity conservation within the Council and ensure that the Council has regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity in all its actions.

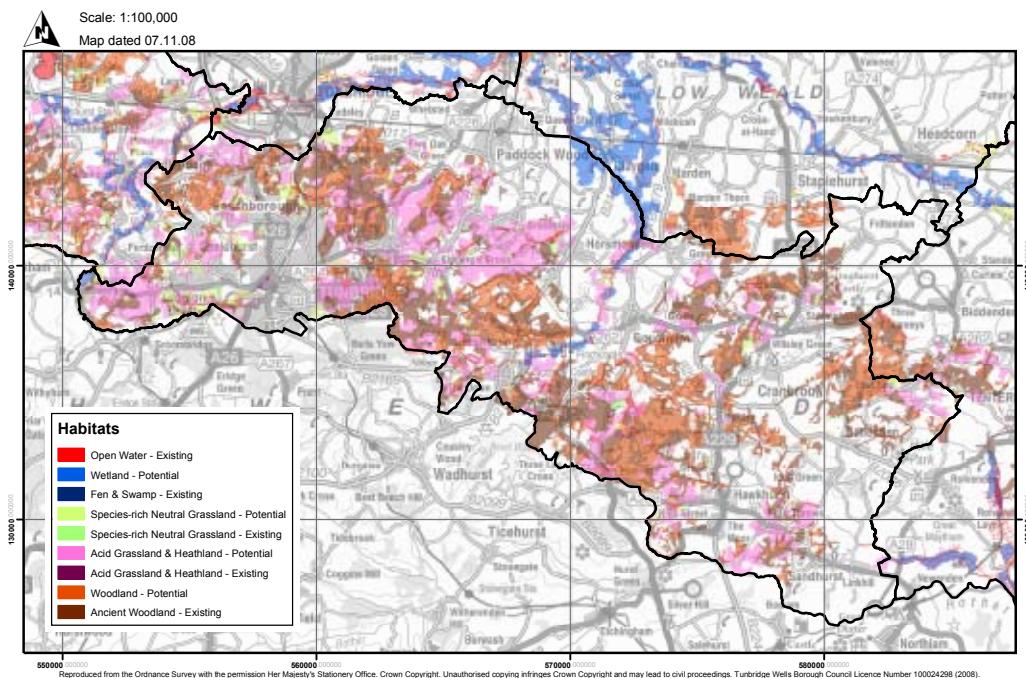
# CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS IMPACT

## How does climate change affect our biodiversity?

We are already aware that average global temperatures are rising; the global nitrogen cycle is changing (which contributes to changes to sea levels, snow cover, weather patterns and sea temperatures); extreme events such as flooding and droughts are increasing in both severity and frequency; pollution continues to degrade our soil and water resources; land use changes, intensive management, over-harvesting and urbanisation are all causing habitat degradation, fragmentation and loss. The spread of existing and new alien and exotic species and human population growth all add to the pressures that our biodiversity faces today.

### Climate change is already causing the loss of biodiversity

- The accelerated changes are limiting biodiversity resilience to repair and replenish as quickly as it needs to in order to survive.
- It is affecting species population size, dynamics, behaviour abundance and distribution.
- It is disrupting breeding, creating barriers to migration and increasing disease and pest transmission.
- Migratory wildlife are particularly vulnerable because they use multiple habitats, needing a wide range of resources at different points of their migratory cycles.
- Changes are already occurring in prey distribution and this can only increase.
- Spring events, such as flowering and leaf flushing, are occurring on average 2.3 days earlier per decade, resulting in devastating effects; for example, mis-matches between migratory birds' arrival date and optimum breeding date, ie most birds are now arriving earlier or later depending on the migration path, thus missing the optimum time for food for their young, eg Pied Flycatcher.



Provisional Habitat opportunities map identifying ability to adapt to climate change.



© Fungus by Steve Smith

We cannot treat priority habitats and species in isolation; ecosystems must be considered as a whole and how the different components function and depend on one another and how these ecosystems are responding to climatic and environment change. By improving our ecological connectivity, we can help conserve our heritage.

This Action Plan seeks to evaluate the biodiversity in the borough and establish, as far as possible within the knowledge we have now, what we all can do to ensure the survival of our biodiversity. We cannot prevent the effects of climate change, but we can minimise the impact it has on our biodiversity by taking the following actions to improve our ecosystem resilience, giving species the chance to adapt to the changes in their environment.

## Proposed actions and targets to reduce the impact of Climate change on our biodiversity

- To work together in partnerships to create the habitat connectivity essential for our biodiversity.
- To reduce the pressure on biodiversity, eg by encouraging landowners to manage their land less intensively.
- To halt further habitat fragmentation.
- To aid species dispersal through ensuring a habitat matrix exists and increasing connectivity on a landscape scale for target habitats and species.
- To take proactive measures to protect endangered habitats and species and facilitate their movement, eg creating suitable migratory habitats, networks and stop off points (wildlife friendly margins, hedgerows, small copses and ponds).
- To focus local action on functioning habitat connectivity, stepping stones, buffers, links, viability and network.
- To provide local biodiversity LHP/LBAP Champions.
- To communicate climate change and its impact to the people in our borough.
- To continue with on-going research, monitoring and evaluation.

# BIODIVERSITY

Within the borough there exists a diverse range of wildlife; habitats include heathland, ancient woodlands, meadows and hedgerows, ponds, rivers and streams.

These habitats are under immense pressure from development and land use changes. It is therefore important to understand the biodiversity in our lives and ensure it is protected and enhanced. This Plan sets out to ensure that no more biodiversity loss occurs and how we can conserve and enhance what remains for today and our future generations.

The Biodiversity Partnership Group has therefore chosen six priority habitats from the Kent County Biodiversity Action Plan and a further two because of their local significance to our borough. This does not mean that the remaining six priority habitats that fall within the borough are precluded: merely that for the next five years, efforts will be focused on the selected six below. This is a living document and it can evolve to account for changes in policies, funding and other pressures. It is, however, a framework within which to work, helping to prioritise and guide the borough in conserving its heritage.

## Tunbridge Wells Borough Priority Habitats

- Lowland Meadows
- Lowland dry acid grassland
- Lowland Heath
- Built up areas and gardens
- Hedgerows
- Lowland woodland pasture and Historic Parkland

## Tunbridge Wells Habitats of Local Significance

- Rocky outcrops
- Gill woodlands





**Local meadow**

© photo by Janina Holubecki HWAONB Unit

## Lowland Meadows

There is a diverse range of grasslands that exist in the borough. By 'Lowland Meadows', we are particularly looking at our ancient unimproved grasslands. Within these grasslands biodiversity is prolific; in just one field over 100 different species can co-exist. These meadows make up our local landscape just as they have for hundreds of years. Our ancestors managed them and we intend to continue to manage them, to keep what is special to our borough. Species such as the green winged orchid, nightjars, barn owls and bats, all need these grasslands in order to survive. Wandering

down to Barnett's Wood Local Nature Reserve and experiencing the sheer beauty and breadth of biodiversity within these rare meadows is little short of breath taking; an experience we wish future generations to enjoy.

This Action Plan will set out how we, with our partners, will bring back into management our lowland meadows, which are characteristic of our borough, forming the landscape, as we know it today.

### Habitat Description

Ancient and unimproved species-rich grasslands, which can contain over 100 plant varieties in one field.



Cinderhill Woods, Matfield

## Lowland Dry Acid Grassland

This habitat has suffered severe decline since the war, predominantly because the land has been intensively improved for agriculture and/or developed. Thus, the little that is remaining is of national significance, with Kent now only having 0.2% of acid grassland remaining.

Acid grassland has a unique flora structure incorporating an array of rare plants, which encourage rare birds such as woodlark to forage and nest, making this habitat vital for their survival.

We have fantastic examples of these acid grasslands in the borough; for example, Southborough Town Common, Woodbury Park and the Borough Cemetery.

Lack of management (such as allowing the meadows to become scrub, over-grazing, etc) is the biggest threat to this habitat and in this Action Plan we set out how we can begin to restore and enhance these beautiful grasslands and how the local community can help.

### Habitat description

Grassland growing in acid soils and over sandstone, sand, gravel and peat substrates. It is usually found within other habitats such as heathland.



**Cinderhill Woods, Matfield**

## Lowland Heath

Heathland is of international importance, suffering intense pressures from predominantly land use change and humans; it is estimated that Kent alone has lost 95% of this ancient habitat in the last 200 years. In our borough, we are lucky enough to support viable tracts of heathland, such as Tudeley Woods and Bedgebury, which on a national landscape level link up with heathland in East Sussex, Hampshire and Dorset.

These heaths are vitally important to birds, mammal, reptiles and invertebrates, particularly with our changing climate.

Pembury Heath (part of the RSPB Tudeley Woods Nature Reserve) is one of our borough's outstanding examples of heathland and is host to rare birds such as the Dartford warbler, nightjar and woodlark. This heath is managed by the RSPB, and various other organisation help fund such vital work, including the High Weald AONB Unit and Kent Wildlife Trust, as well as ourselves.

This Action Plan will support the conservation work that is already happening and will focus on maximising the connectivity of these habitats and minimising the threats and pressures this significant priority habitat currently faces.

### Habitat Description

Poor soils which generally support low growing shrub such as heather and gorse. A mosaic of heather, bracken, scattered trees and shrub, bare ground, wet heath and bog grasses.

## Woodbury Park Cemetery



## Built Up Areas and Gardens

Many people do not envisage urban areas as having any wildlife value. In Tunbridge Wells it is amazing just how much wildlife exists in churchyards, allotments, parks and open spaces, hospitals, gardens, etc – the biodiversity is prolific. Collectively, this mosaic of green spaces creates significant corridors that allow wildlife to move around, breed and feed, thus sustaining the biodiversity of our borough.

Woodbury Park Cemetery and Hawkenbury allotments are examples of small green spaces where locally rare species exist, such as the green winged orchid and the Burnett moth, as well as remnants of acid grassland. Species such as these rely on the mosaics of green spaces that are scattered all over our borough in order to survive. With climate change affecting all our wildlife, your

gardens, local parks, etc are paramount in providing refuge to our biodiversity.

Of significance to the royal town of Tunbridge Wells is the town's proximity to areas of conservation interest such as Rusthall, Tunbridge Wells and Southborough Commons, which host an array of wildlife eager to be able to cross town via the motorway networks of our trees, hedgerows, gardens and pocket parks, etc. It is essential for us to protect the travel network that exists today for their survival and, wherever possible, link up further networks.

Our Action Plan on built up areas and gardens will set out how we are going to conserve this valuable habitat and how the local community can help.

### Habitat Description

Cemeteries, allotments, parks and open spaces, gardens, waste ground and industrial sites.



## Hedges in the High Weald

© photo by HWAONB Unit

# Hedgerows

During the last 50 years we have lost large tracts of hedgerows, with devastating consequences on our wildlife, in particular our bird life. These habitats are important in their own right, but collectively they act as significant corridors for wildlife to move from place to place; on a busy day your local hedge could resemble the M25!

Hedgerows are part of our ancient landscape significant to the High Weald and are important to birds, plants, mammals and invertebrates. Nationally, they are important in reflecting the British landscape and within these habitats exist very old trees

(veteran trees), which are a habitat in their own right. They are vital in linking up our woodlands and of particular significance are our ancient woodlands, of which we have so many: a survey of Lamberhurst Parish revealed 60% of ancient hedgerows linked to ancient woodland, ensuring healthy genetic population distribution.

Our Action Plan sets out how we are going to restore and reinstate our hedgerows to create viable corridors for all our wildlife traffic; it sets out how our community can help us to achieve these aims.

### Habitat Description

Boundary lines of shrubs scrub and trees.



**Bedgebury Park**

## Lowland Woodland Pasture and Historic Parks and Gardens

Wood-pasture is a habitat that has derived from the traditional grazing of livestock between scattered pollards and/or stands of trees in open grassy areas or heathland. Wood-pasture is the legacy of historic land management practices of medieval times that were widespread up until the early 19th century. Many such areas were part of or have been incorporated into the medieval parks and/or 19th century parks and gardens.

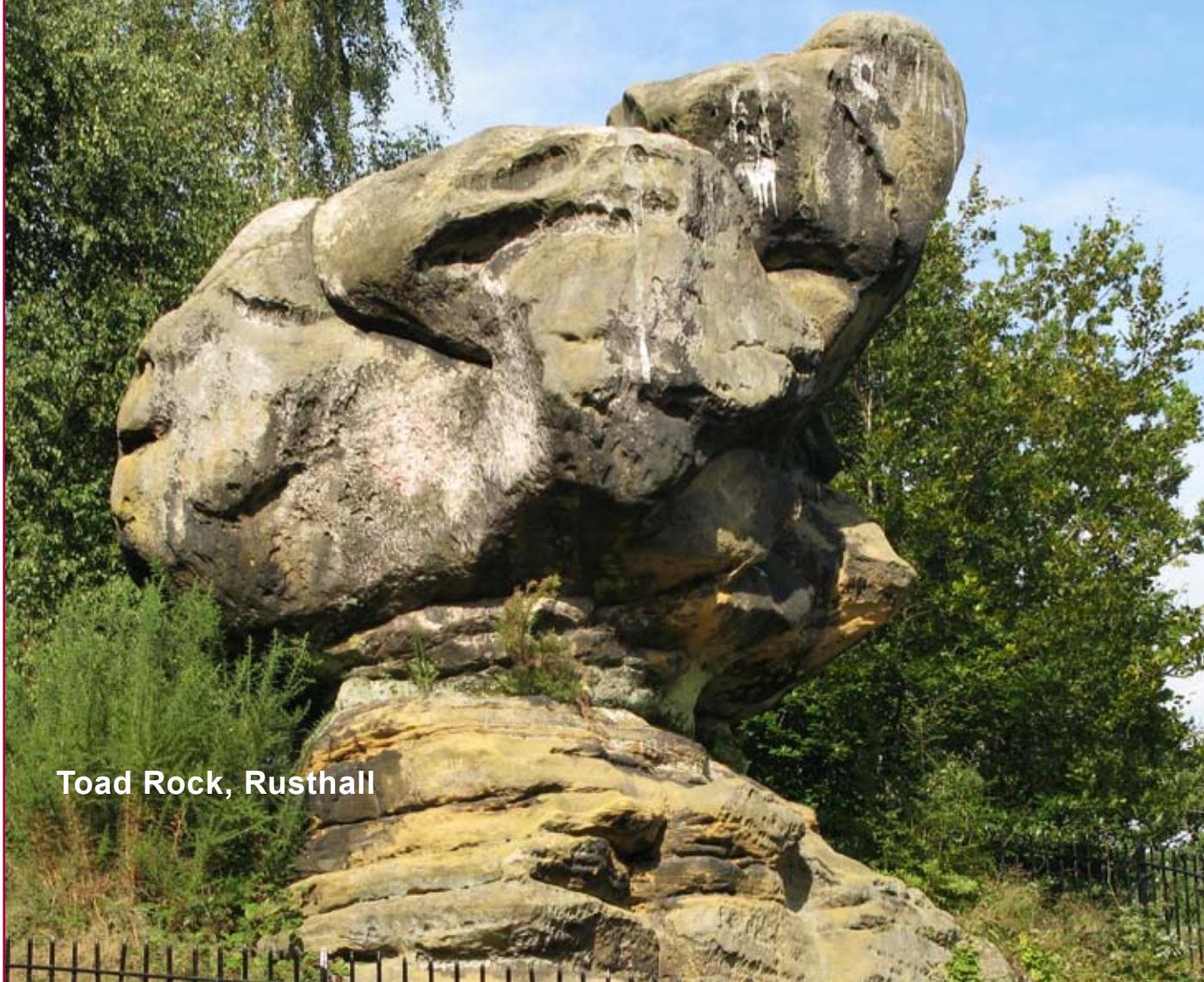
The combination of pasture and scattered and veteran trees is not only valued in terms of its historic and landscape character but for providing a habitat for many forms of wildlife,

from communities of specialised lichens and fungi, to hole-nesting birds, bats and insects. The buildings associated with this historic landscape utilised local materials and methods, such as sandstone, timber frames and clay tiles which have also provided important habitats for a number of species including lichens, bats and birds.

Highly valued for their landscape, cultural and biodiversity interest these sites are at risk primarily from poor or misguided management and pressures of modern usage and increasingly development pressures.

### Habitat Description

Landscape of scattered trees and pasture often associated with historic buildings and/or landscapes containing veteran trees and historic features such as ponds, ancient woodlands, banks and hedgerows.



Toad Rock, Rusthall

## Rocky Outcrops

These unique, internationally rare, sandy rocky outcrops that exist in the borough, such as Toad Rock on Rusthall Common and Wellington Rocks on Royal Tunbridge Wells Common, are characteristic of our landscape and contribute to what makes Tunbridge Wells so special. Both of these wonderful weathered rocks are of national importance and are designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Weathering has created some unusual, often spectacular, forms, as well as large expanses of

bedrock that often take us by surprise as we wander along our country lanes. Often, this wonderful habitat has some rare mosses, liverworts and ferns living on it.

This Plan sets out how we will ensure that we conserve these local habitats, which are suffering intense physical pressure from humans due to climbing, vandalism, visitor numbers and climatic conditions, and what the local community can do to help.

### Habitat Description

Exposed sedimentary sandstone rocks, often weathered to form unusual shapes.



**Gill in Sproud's Wood, Speldhurst**

## Gill Woodland

These ancient woodland remnants are unique to Kent and East Sussex. These species-rich habitats are created by the shady, humid conditions of steep-sided ravines, creating unique conditions that are of major significance for the survival of ferns, mosses and liverworts.

Excellent examples of these gill woodlands can be admired in Shadwell Woods, Sproud's Woods and Avery Woods.

This Action Plan sets out how to protect and enhance our local heritage and how our partners and the community can help us reach this aim. Although in this Plan we will prioritise those ancient woodlands that contain gills, we will endeavour to maintain and protect all ancient woodland identified in the recently published Ancient Woodland Inventory for the borough.

### Habitat Description

Steep sided ravines found in woods of Kent and Sussex, which provide shady, humid conditions ideal for mosses, liverworts and ferns.

# How can you help to protect Tunbridge Wells biodiversity?

There are many ways that you, as an individual, community group, landowner, farmer, business or organisation can help to protect Tunbridge Wells Biodiversity. To find out more, contact the relevant organisation detailed in our insert *Habitat Action Plans*.

## As an individual or community group, you can:

- Look after your garden in a wildlife friendly way. Collectively, gardens form a network of habitats and are important to many wildlife species. Kent Wildlife Trust and the Kent High Weald Partnership run a Gardening for Wildlife scheme, for instance, which rewards those who garden in such a positive manner.
- Become a member of, or volunteer for, a local conservation/environmental group.
- Become a biodiversity guardian for your area.
- Get together with local people and start up a local community group to take action for wildlife in your area. If you're in a group already, try working with other groups in the area.
- Buy local produce.
- Send us information on interesting species in your area.
- Try and live more sustainably; for instance, use less water and energy by having a water butt, taking showers instead of baths, etc. If we all make one change, collectively we can make a positive impact on our biodiversity.
- Influence policy through the consultation process.

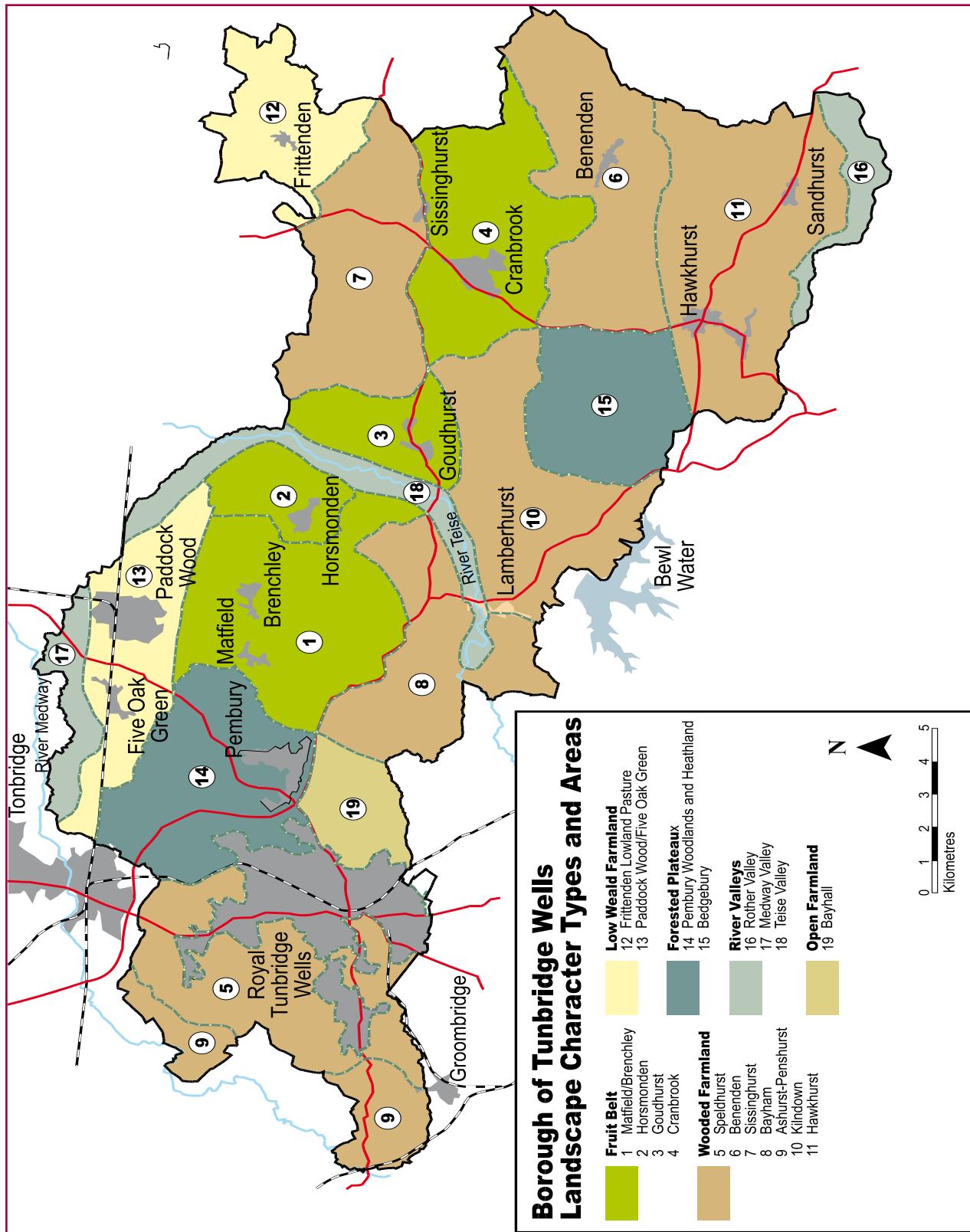
## As a landowner or farmer, you can:

- Identify wildlife features on your land and manage them more sensitively.
- Consider entering the environmental stewardship scheme, which rewards those that manage their land with our biodiversity in mind.
- Consider planting hedgerows and copses; grants are available from the Forest Enterprise for such works.
- Create new ponds and reinstate your old ones; the borough needs as many areas of water scattered across it to act as stepping stones for our wildlife. Without these stepping stones, our biodiversity will struggle to exist as we know it today, with the threats it now faces due to changing climatic conditions.



# LANDSCAPE

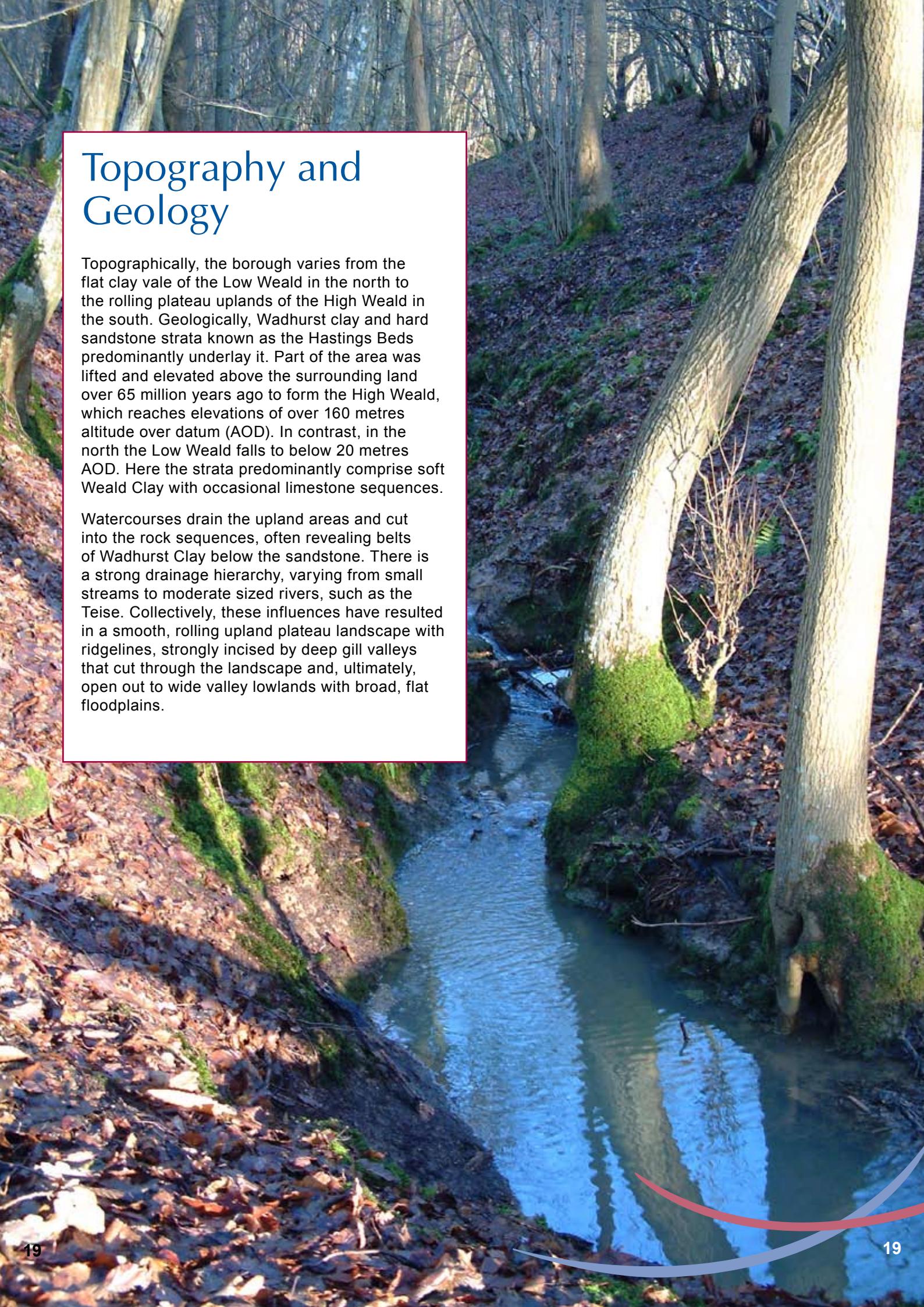
## Maps of Landscape Character in the borough and habitat types



# Topography and Geology

Topographically, the borough varies from the flat clay vale of the Low Weald in the north to the rolling plateau uplands of the High Weald in the south. Geologically, Wadhurst clay and hard sandstone strata known as the Hastings Beds predominantly underlay it. Part of the area was lifted and elevated above the surrounding land over 65 million years ago to form the High Weald, which reaches elevations of over 160 metres altitude over datum (AOD). In contrast, in the north the Low Weald falls to below 20 metres AOD. Here the strata predominantly comprise soft Weald Clay with occasional limestone sequences.

Watercourses drain the upland areas and cut into the rock sequences, often revealing belts of Wadhurst Clay below the sandstone. There is a strong drainage hierarchy, varying from small streams to moderate sized rivers, such as the Teise. Collectively, these influences have resulted in a smooth, rolling upland plateau landscape with ridgelines, strongly incised by deep gill valleys that cut through the landscape and, ultimately, open out to wide valley lowlands with broad, flat floodplains.



# History of the Weald

Following the last Ice Age, a dense forest, known as Andredsweald, covered much of the borough. The area was therefore very slow to develop and become settled because of the dense woodland cover and heavy soils.

Jutish settlers came from North Kent and created a series of 'drove routes'. These were used to move their livestock across the North Downs and into the forested Weald. This enabled them to take advantage of the autumn forest grazing, or 'pannage'.

In Roman times, the area started to be opened up, when the trees were cleared in some areas in order to get access to the iron deposits in the Wadhurst Clay for smelting. This was continued on a small scale into the 15th century. At this time, the High Weald became a centre of heavy industry. Important landscape features seen today date from this period – ponds that were iron ore barrow pits and hammer ponds.

The need for charcoal during this time led to the management of woodland by 'coppicing'.





## Summary of Landscape Character

The Borough Council has produced Supplementary Planning Guidance, the Borough Landscape Character Area Assessment, August 2002. The document has identified six character types and 19 individual character areas.

The landscape character of the whole borough is summarised as:

Fruit Belt	Forested Plateaux
Matfield/Brenchley Horsmonden Goudhurst Cranbrook	Pembury Bedgebury
Wooded Farmland	River Valleys
Speldhurst Benenden Sissinghurst Bayham Groombridge and Penshurst Kilndown Hawkhurst	Rother Valley Medway Valley Teise Valley
Low Weald Farmland	Open Farmland
Frittenden Pastures Paddock Wood/Five Oak Green	Bayhall

The borough has a distinctive and diverse landscape formed by a patchwork of agriculture, woodland, heathland and rural settlement superimposed upon a landform of rolling plateaux incised by thin ghyll valleys and wide river valley floodplains. It is predominantly a rural, agricultural landscape of grazed pastures and arable fields highlighted with broad belts of orchards and hop gardens, all set within a framework of woodland.

The landscape presents a peaceful and tranquil character, often with a sense of rural remoteness, which belies its location in the populous south east of England. The strong wooded framework is provided by the upland blankets of coniferous plantation, thin ghyll woodlands nestled in the valleys and woodland shaw boundaries that harmoniously knit the various agricultural landscapes together. Settlement and built character provides a further layer of interest with a locally characteristic vernacular style including brick, tiled, weatherboarded, half-timbered and sandstone buildings. These form traditional ridge-top villages with commanding views of the countryside. There are also farmsteads, isolated rural dwellings, including characteristic Wealden Hall Houses, and visually distinctive clusters of oasts.

# MORE INFORMATION

## How did we choose the Tunbridge Wells borough priority habitats?

A local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) is both a process and a product. The process is continuous and involves getting people together on biodiversity issues, setting up a biodiversity partnership and ensuring a long-term commitment to the LBAP process. The product is an LBAP Action Plan, which follows the criteria agreed by the UK Biodiversity Partnership. This habitat audit looked at:

- The distribution and extent of the habitats; what is the quality and significance of these habitats in both a national and local context?
- Are these habitats fragmentised? Can they be enhanced to make them a viable habitat? How do they/could they link up with similar habitats to act as stepping-stones?
- Are there any national and/or local rare species existing in this habitat? What habitats are important for key priority species in the borough?
- Are any of these habitats under threat now, or in the imminent future? For example, pressure from lack of management, recreation, pollution, climate change and development? What is the rate of decline in these habitats?
- What is of local distinctiveness in the borough? What habitats are associated with the Tunbridge Wells borough?
- What local opportunities are there for local people to contribute towards the local and the national biodiversity plan?



# THE NEXT STEPS

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Your view counts and now is the chance for you to have your say about where we live. Tunbridge Wells Borough Council are in the process of consulting experts and local interest groups about the new Local Biodiversity Action Plan and it is equally important to obtain a wide spectrum of public opinion to feed into the Plan.

Following the consultation period, the LBAP will be modified and then adopted by the Council and published in 2009. The practical conservation work can then continue according to the Plan's objectives.



© Yew Berries by P Williams



If you require this information in large print, on audiotape or in any other format, please contact us on 01892 526121