



Ashdown Forest Vision & Management Strategy

2021 - 2031



Introduction

Marsh Genies



Humanity is facing pressing biodiversity loss and climate change emergencies. Ashdown Forest has a critical role in responding to these challenges. We have an opportunity, with our vision and accompanying plan, to increase and protect rare habitats on the Forest for the species that depend on them, enhance our wetland areas to sequester more carbon to mitigate climate change whilst improving the mental and physical wellbeing of our visitors.

Ashdown Forest is a living time capsule of the culture and history of our county and nation. The internationally important heathland that we care for, alongside our woodlands, represent generations of human activity. At the heart of our ecosystem is grazing by wild and domestic animals that, alongside woodland clearance, created the original Forest landscape.

This process intensified in the medieval era with the Forest's enclosure as a royal hunting park behind a 23 mile long pale or fence. Large areas of the Forest were enclosed in the eighteenth century, with the remainder retaining its rights of common. Records show the battles waged to keep these rights. These fights, and the creation of the Conservators in 1885, allow us all to enjoy open access to the beautiful landscape of Ashdown Forest today.

Yet public access can lead to disturbance or damage of the Forest's natural landscape. As the custodians of Ashdown Forest, we must solve a complex puzzle. We are responsible for protecting the wildlife communities and spectacular landscape, especially the internationally designated heathland and valley mire areas, whilst also facilitating public access. We believe the solution lies in dialogue, careful management and appropriate funding. This is against the backdrop of having seen significant reductions in our income from public sources. Our budget is constrained exactly at a time when understanding of the importance of the Forest is growing and our responsibilities are increasing. We will need to make difficult, bold decisions over the next ten years to ensure we meet our responsibilities.

Rather than be deterred, we will develop innovative, alongside proven, approaches to funding, community engagement and access whilst protecting the Forest.

A key focus will be on the health, both physical and mental, of all our visitors. Use of the Forest by the public has grown steadily in recent years and monitoring suggests 1.4 million visits were made during 2016. The number of visits increased greatly during the Coronavirus pandemic of 2020/21 with the Forest remaining open throughout challenging lockdowns. We want to enhance the experience for our visitors, providing a welcoming environment that is rich in wildlife while offering activity and adventure and peace and tranquility in equal measure.

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We will need to make difficult decisions over the next 10 years just to ensure we meet our various statutory responsibilities and obligations

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We want the people making 1.4 million visits to the Forest every year, to enjoy and value this incredible place

We will help our local visitors in treasuring the Forest whilst assisting our visitors from further afield to create lasting memories. As an outdoor laboratory, we will strive for National Nature Reserve status, the last major designation that the Forest lacks.

Below we set out five priorities that meet our binding obligations to protect and enhance the unique heathland environment of Ashdown Forest whilst also delivering on our commitment to providing the largest open-access, wildlife-rich place in the Southeast.

This remarkable place needs our care more now than ever and this document sets out how we will honour that commitment.



Susan McAll
Chair, The Conservators of Ashdown Forest
James Adler
CEO and Clerk Ashdown Forest





6,500 acres of land makes up Ashdown Forest

150km Forest boundary length

Commoner cattle (156) and sheep (600)

1.4 million visits per year

27 Ponds

Home of one of the UK's only native bears - Winnie the Pooh

12 Historic tree clumps

2 International environmental designations

2.5% of the UK's extent of Lowland Heathland

1 Visitor centre

24 Dragonfly and Damselfly species

47 Car parks

120km Path length

1 Bowling Green

Highest level of UK environmental protection

15 Bridges

Number of Conservator cattle (30), sheep (335) and ponies (44)

An original Rothschild Reserve, one of only eight in Sussex

10 Members of staff (FTE)

1 Golf course

9 Regular birds of prey (Hobby, Kestrel, Sparrowhawk, Goshawk, Red Kite, Honey-buzzard, Buzzard, Tawny Owl, Barn Owl)

Home to Sussex's largest populations of Dartford Warblers and Marsh Gentians

7 Scheduled Monuments

2 Waterfalls

5 Cricket pitches

One of only two Sussex locations for the rare Marsh Fern

Our vision

Round-leaved Sandew

Ashdown Forest is a jewel in the crown of the Sussex landscape for our and future generations. Ashdown Forest is treasured by local, regional, and international communities for its extraordinary nature and culture. It is a cornerstone of a bigger, better, and more interconnected landscape. It is a place where people understand and enjoy the natural environment around them, and where wildlife and people thrive together.



Our mission

To protect, conserve and enhance the nature and culture of Ashdown Forest as the largest biodiverse heathland and open space in Sussex for the enjoyment, education, health and recreation of all.



Our strategic aims

Ashdown Forest is an internationally recognised site for protecting rare and threatened species and heathland habitats and, just by existing, helps provide clean air and water whilst reducing flood risk.

It is a treasured and well-used landscape, especially important to residents, commoners and local communities. It has an opportunity to be a centre of excellence for education where people come to learn about themselves and the natural world.

It is an area of outstanding natural beauty with powerful connections to the past and contemporary culture, Ashdown Forest, and its surroundings, deserve National Nature Reserve (NNR) status which we will work to achieve.



Ashdown Forest has an opportunity to be a centre of excellence for education where people come to learn about themselves and the natural world





SEVERN



Heath Spotted-Orchid

Raft Spider
Dartford Warbler

The delivery of the mission will take a great deal of management. Ashdown Forest is faced with complex challenges and great opportunities. To grasp these, the organisation needs to evolve. Over the next ten years we will check our work against three strategic aims.

1 Protect, enhance and broaden

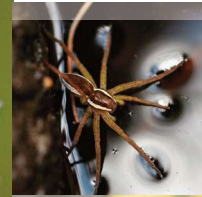
We aim to enhance and protect Ashdown Forest's unique natural, cultural and historical value. We will be at the core of a broader conservation landscape.

2 Collaborate and engage

We aim to collaborate and engage widely and effectively. We will develop partnerships to help us to sustainably manage Ashdown Forest for current visitors and future generations.

3 Welcome and inspire

We aim to welcome everyone and inspire people about Ashdown Forest including our visitors, our stakeholders and our team.



THEB

Our strategic priorities and their outcomes

Our three strategic aims will guide us in the actions we undertake to deliver outcomes and positive changes in the future for Ashdown Forest. These will be designed under five priorities.

1 A beautiful and diverse place sustaining an internationally, nationally and locally important mosaic of wildlife habitats and cultural landscapes.

Outcomes:

- a** Ongoing favourable conservation of the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) status is secured, Appropriate management of the Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Area (SPA) is delivered.
- b** Ashdown Forest is granted National Nature Reserve (NNR) status.
- c** There is extensive conservation grazing across Ashdown Forest undertaken with appropriate livestock type and numbers. This will be driven by the conservation need and delivered in partnership with stakeholders including Commoners.
- d** Scrub and bracken encroachment is reduced, bogs and wetlands hold more water and carbon, heathland habitats are diversified and extended, and the woodland habitat is improved with increased areas of wood pasture created.
- e** Ashdown Forest's historic and cultural assets are well maintained, protected, relevant, enjoyed and accessible.

2 A welcoming destination for all.

Outcomes:

- a** Ashdown Forest is a high-quality visitor destination that is accessible for all. The Forest attracts a broad range of visitors, visiting for a variety of recreational educational and wellbeing purposes.
- b** Visitors are informed about what Ashdown Forest offers and are supported to use the Forest in the most sustainable way. They are directed to areas of the Forest that best support their activities.
- c** The inspiring views and vistas of Ashdown Forest are recovered, maintained and enhanced.
- d** Ashdown Forest's rich cultural heritage is accessible by our visitors. Our visitor experience will reflect this including the world imagined by A.A. Milne and E.H. Shepherd as the home of Winnie the Pooh.
- e** Our communities, local and regional, are actively and positively engaged. This includes both our commoner and resident communities.
- f** Effective litter, waste and dog management is delivered reducing environmental damage and visual pollution.



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We will deliver outcomes and positive changes in the future for Ashdown Forest.”

Our strategic priorities and their outcomes



3 An inspiring space benefiting peoples' health, and providing opportunities for education, recreation and enjoyment.

Outcomes:

- a** There will be an increased understanding and awareness of the international and national importance of Ashdown Forest for biodiversity and the mitigation of and adaption to climate change.
- b** Ashdown Forest is recognised and funded for its commitment to and role in supporting mental and physical health.
- c** A passionate, expanded and deeply engaged volunteer network will assist in every element of Forest activity.
- d** Schools, universities and individuals are encouraged to study, report and present their findings on all elements of the Forest.

4 Lying at the heart of a partnership extending and connecting land for conservation and amenity.

Outcomes:

- a** The wider Ashdown Forest area is recognised as a significant conservation and heritage landscape in its own right, bordering and buffering the protected land area.
- b** A culture of engaging and partnering to position Ashdown Forest at the heart of a greater conservation and amenity landscape. Swathes of suitable habitat will link the Forest to other key wildlife sites. This will allow species to respond to a changing climate. Wildlife and people will be able to move through these landscapes.
- c** A sustainable, balanced, controlled and monitored deer population across Ashdown Forest and neighbouring lands.



5 A resilient and open organisation, where challenges are embraced, and opportunities explored.

Outcomes:

- a** Sustainable core funding delivered by a business model that will achieve consistent income appropriate to the day-to-day management of Ashdown Forest.
- b** A strong pipeline of funded projects will further improve Ashdown Forest. The Ashdown Forest Foundation (TAFF), alongside governmental environmental funding, will play a central role in this delivery.
- c** An informed, engaged, diverse, inclusive and well-trained staff working with an enthusiastic and well supported volunteer team are equipped and resourced to manage the Forest effectively and efficiently.
- d** Passionate and knowledgeable people will continue to want to become Conservators, driving changes to governance and developing the ongoing vision for the Forest.
- e** A funded plan for assessing Ashdown Forest's carbon sequestration and emissions and demonstrating climate positive operations by 2027.



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Preparing for the future

Nightjar chick



This document details our strategic objectives agreed by the Conservators of Ashdown Forest for the period 2021-2031. However, to deliver this long-term strategy, a short term (initially three years) business plan will be developed following the publication of this vision.

This will contain waypoints against which overall progress towards the strategic objectives can be monitored and achievements tracked. The plan will also outline key projects which,

while not driven by our core business, contribute to the strategic objectives. Financial and human resources will be adjusted to ensure that agreed goals can be achieved.

Monitoring and evaluation



To manage and improve our performance, we will measure and monitor our impacts. We will identify performance waypoints within the Business Plan relevant to each strategic priority and will use a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis to determine our performance.

Measures of success will be reported to visitors, stakeholders and communities through publication and dissemination of our Annual Report.

The Annual Report will evaluate whether we have achieved our aims and assess how successful we have been in delivering the outcomes identified in the Strategy.

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We need to always achieve our legislative and regulatory obligations, alongside the protection and conservation of the Forest whilst maintaining spaces for sustainable recreation



THORBEN

FOULKE

Implementing our strategy

We will work to deliver our mission and strategic priorities by undertaking actions relevant to our three strategic aims.

1. Protect, enhance and broaden **2. Collaborate and engage** **3. Welcome and inspire**

In the context of our five strategic priorities, we will be bound by our legislative and regulatory obligations, striving to deliver protection and conservation while remaining an open and accessible space.

1

Protect, enhance and broaden

- a We will develop and implement conservation management plans for key species, habitats, historic features and landscapes.
- b We will monitor species and habitats as well as visitor experience and attitudes to allow continual improvement of management actions.
- c We will be at the forefront of researching, investigating and applying innovative as well as tried-and-tested management practices to improve Ashdown Forest's habitats and wildlife populations.
- d We will develop an innovative business model that will generate the required income to support a well-resourced and sustainable organisation and allow for continual investment and improvement.
- e We will develop a network of relations and partnerships with neighbours and others to place Ashdown Forest at the centre of a larger, better and more joined up landscape for conservation and amenity. We will explore how this may be funded by public and private means.
- f We will explore practical options to extend conservation programmes, including grazing, across the Forest through partnerships with Commoners and others.
- g We will work with partners within the High Weald AONB to study and influence the local Fallow deer population.
- h We will explore the process to become an "Approved Body" to manage Ashdown Forest as a potential National Nature Reserve.
- i We will work with experts to understand Ashdown Forest's ability to sequester climate gases and reduce our operational carbon footprint. We will work with other organisations to align environmental and climate objectives.

2

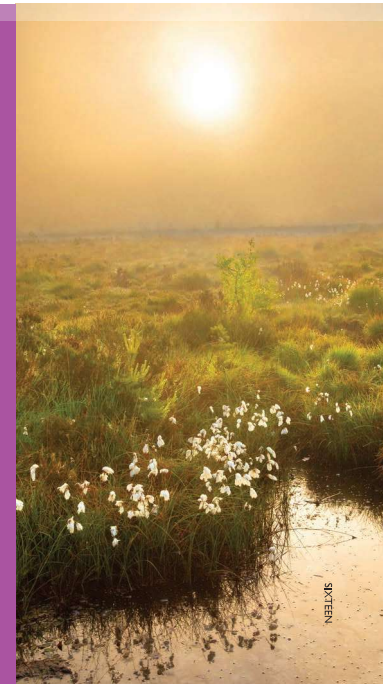
Collaborate and engage

- a We will position Ashdown Forest at the heart of its local communities through engagement, building partnerships and providing opportunities for people to help protect it especially around volunteering.
- b We will seek out and engage with those around us who can help Ashdown Forest to improve and diversify.
- c We will build and invest in our workforce of staff and increasing base of volunteers that is motivated, trained and resourced to deliver high quality services and governance.
- d We will, as Ashdown Forest expands, become a significant local employer and generator of employment through support of local businesses.
- e We will encourage schools and universities to visit, support them in their study of Ashdown Forest, and integrate research and research findings into management.

3

Welcome and inspire

- a We will carefully manage visitor access to Ashdown Forest operating within recognised standards to ensure safety and high levels of enjoyment. We will use, and where necessary develop, our byelaws effectively to support this.
- b We will improve visitor access to Ashdown Forest, partnering to promote and enhance sustainable transport for access and review opportunities to improve car parks and other facilities. This will be designed alongside the legislation governing the environmental protections on the area. We will actively explore opportunities for a gateway site for visitors including toilets, catering, information, education and dog management.
- c We will develop an educational and engagement offer to share and explain the Forest's natural, cultural, landscape and heritage values.
- d We will inspire healthy and active lifestyles by promoting and managing use of the Forest as a welcoming place for recreation, inspiration, enjoyment and wellbeing.



Our core values

Ashdown Forest will be:

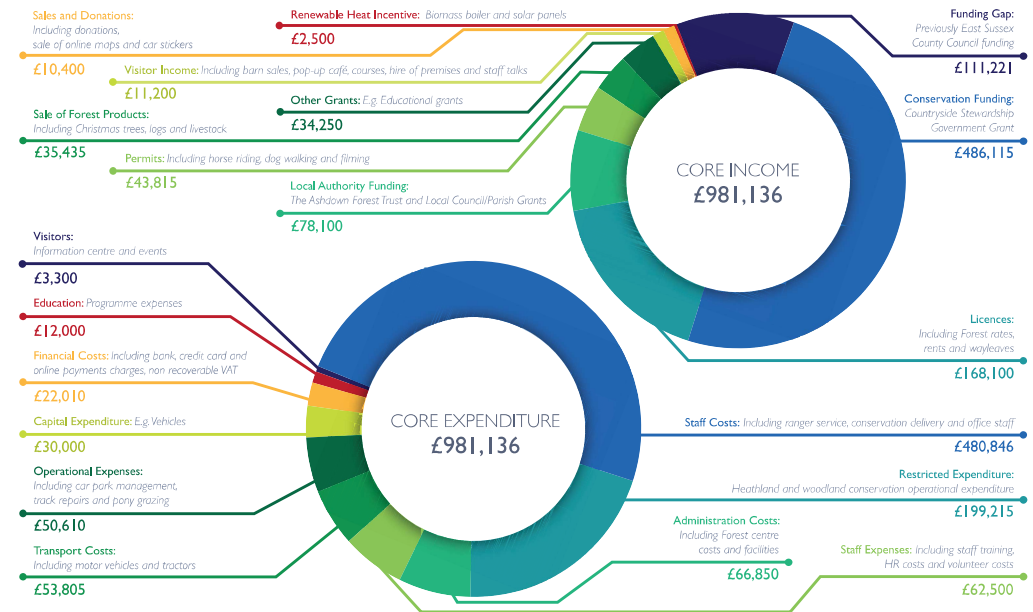
- Welcoming, informative and inspiring
- Sustainable – ecologically and financially
- Inclusive and collaborative
- Innovative
- Rooted in the community



Resource allocation



Generic Year based on 2021/22 Figures



Glossary



Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB):

The purpose of an AONB designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of a designated landscape. Unlike National Parks, AONBs do not have their own planning powers. Ashdown Forest is within the High Weald AONB.

Ashdown Forest Trust

Set up in 1988, the Trust owns Ashdown Forest. It is set up as a Charitable Trust with one trustee: East Sussex County Council. Day to day management of the Forest is delivered by the Conservators of Ashdown Forest under The Ashdown Forest Act 1974 and the Declaration of Trust creating the Ashdown Forest Trust of 1988. The Trust has no staff. www.register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search/charity-details/800437/charity-overview

Ashdown Forest Conservation Trust

The Charitable Trust was set up in 1979 to manage expenditure for the Ashdown Forest Centre when it was built. It continues to hold investments. It is not involved in the day to day management of the Forest and has no staff. www.register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search/charity-details/278920/charity-overview

Biodiversity

The variety of plant and animal life in the world or in a particular habitat, a high level of which is considered to be important and desirable.

Bracken

A species of fern. One of the most successful species of plants in the world. It is found on all continents except Antarctica. Due to its ability to rapidly colonise areas, bracken can outcompete other plants including specialist heathland species. As such it requires significant management interventions.

Carbon sequestration

This is the long-term removal or capture of carbon dioxide or other climate gases from the atmosphere. It can slow or reverse climate change.

Climate Positive

An activity that goes beyond achieving net zero carbon emissions to create an environmental benefit, by removing additional climate change gases from the atmosphere.

Common Land

Land that is subject to the rights of other people to carry out certain activities. These Common Rights may include grazing animals or collecting wood. All common land has an owner, whether it is a local authority, the National Trust or a private individual. The public has the right to walk on all commons under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. Some commons already had a right for the public before that act and those rights persist. The public were allowed to walk on Ashdown Forest before the CRoW Act.

Conservation Grazing

Grazing is often the most effective and natural way to maintain certain habitats such as heathland. It helps to keep areas open and ensures a wider variety of plants and animals. Traditional systems carried out by rural people grazing their animals and living off the land maintained the habitats on Ashdown Forest that are protected today. In the past, where people cleared land for cultivation and pasture, their grazing animals helped replicate the effect of wild large herbivores which had previously existed. Conservation grazing aims to continue this traditional system to help maintain habitats.

Conservation Management Plan

A plan that sets out the significance of an area of land and details how management will be carried out in order to maintain or enhance that significance.

Conservators' Land

The Conservators of Ashdown Forest have, when possible, acquired land within the pale of the old Royal Hunting Forest. These areas are close to the present Forest area, are managed by the Conservators, but are not subject to the terms of the Ashdown Forest Act 1974. As of 2021, the area of this land is 201.46 acres.



Conservators of Ashdown Forest

This is the body with the day to day management of the Forest. It employs a Chief Executive (who is also the Clerk for the Conservators) and a team of staff and rangers. It has a range of rights under the 1974 Act to manage the Forest. It can create and enforce byelaws, collect rates and regulate the common land usage. It was originally created under the Common Lands Regulation (Ashdown Forest) Provisional Order Confirmation Act of 1885. The Board of 16 Conservators is made up of the "Lord of the Manor", who represents the owner (the Ashdown Forest Trust). This role is filled by the Chair of East Sussex County Council. Eight Conservators are assigned by East Sussex County Council. These roles do not need to be filled by elected County Councillors. Five Conservators are elected by the 731 households with Commoners' Rights. Two are assigned by Wealden District Council.

Environmental Land Management schemes (ELMs)

This is the English Government's programme of payments for the delivery of "public goods". These goods include biodiversity improvements and maintenance and the delivery of clean air and water.

Favourable Condition

That a SSSI's habitats and features are in a healthy state and are being conserved by appropriate management. Natural England has a range of other condition statuses below this level.

Forest

It is important to note that Ashdown Forest has a capital F at its beginning. This prefix is used by previous UK Royal Forests. Royal forests included large areas of heath, grassland and wetland. Ashdown Forest is famous for its ancient heathland rather than for its trees. A Forest designation, and its associated Law, also applied to the villages, towns and hamlets that lay within its boundary. This restricted the inhabitants in their use of land that they had relied upon for their livelihoods. The enclosure and attempted removal of these rights in the 19th century is what led to the creation of the Conservators.

The Friends of Ashdown Forest

A charity set up in 1961 to assist the Conservators of Ashdown Forest to maintain the Forest by provision of additional funds for specific items which they would otherwise not be able to afford. It is not involved in the day to day management of the Forest and has no staff. Since 1991 the Friends have donated over £720,000 to the Conservators for projects including land purchase, education programmes and vehicles. www.register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search/charity-details/205245/charity-overview

Gorse

Common gorse is a large, evergreen shrub, covered in needle-like leaves and distinctive, coconut-perfumed, yellow flowers. It provides shelter and food for many insects and birds, such as Dartford warblers, Stonechats and Linnets. However it can dominate other, rare species and requires considerable management. Controlled burning and grazing have been used to control the species. Ashdown Forest is also home to Dwarf gorse which is a smaller and less aggressive plant found within the heather sward.

Lowland Heathland

This is a habitat, usually dominated by heather species, found mainly on infertile, acidic soils. It is separated from moorland primarily by altitude. Moorland starts at 300 metres above sea level. Lowland heath supports some of the rarest species in southern England including the specialist bird species of Dartford Warbler and Nightjar; plants such as Marsh Gentian and White beak sedge, all six native British reptiles and more arachnid species than any other UK habitat. Over 85% of the lowland UK heaths have been lost in the last 150 years. Both international designations of Ashdown Forest are for its heathland habitats.



Historic Clump

There are 12 clumps of Scots Pine trees in prominent positions on the Forest. It is believed that many were planted by Countess Elizabeth De La Warr when she inherited the Buckhurst Estate, of which Ashdown Forest was part of until 1988. It is believed she started planting the clumps from 1825. The reasons behind her planting of these clumps and the species of tree chosen are unknown.

Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)

There are a number of invasive, non-native (alien) species that are of concern within the UK because of their invasiveness and ability to overwhelm native populations of other species. They cause severe problems for native animals and the environment. They are also known as non-indigenous, exotic, invasive or introduced species. The main species of concern on the Forest are Rhododendron, Japanese Knotweed and Black Cherry.

The Lawton Review

The headline of this landmark review is "more, bigger, better, more joined up". The Lawton Review, published in 2010, was requested by Hilary Benn, then Environment Secretary. It was chaired by Sir John Lawton and aimed to review how England's wildlife and ecological network could be improved to help nature thrive in the face of climate change and other pressures. The review fed into production of the Natural Environment White Paper, published in 2011, which ensured Government commitment to implementing the Lawton principles. The review concluded that England's wildlife sites, despite their diversity, did not exist as a coherent and resilient ecological network, let alone one capable of coping with the challenge of climate change and other pressures. It called for a step change in nature conservation. Its key principles are summarised as:

- (1) Improve the quality of current sites by better habitat management.
- (2) Increase the size of current wildlife sites.
- (3) Enhance connections between, or join up, sites, either through physical corridors, or through 'stepping stones'.
- (4) Create new sites.
- (5) Reduce the pressures on wildlife by improving the wider environment, including through buffering wildlife sites.

National Nature Reserve (NNR)

These were established to protect some of England's most important habitats, species and geology, and to provide 'outdoor laboratories' for research. Most NNRs offer opportunities to schools, specialist interest groups and the public to experience wildlife at first hand and to learn more about nature conservation. There are currently 225 NNRs in England with a total area of over 98,600 hectares - approximately 0.7% of the country's land surface. The largest is The Wash, covering almost 8,800 hectares, while Dorset's Horn Park Quarry is the smallest at 0.32 hectares. Two thirds of NNRs are managed by Natural England (the Government's advisor on nature conservation). The others are run by "approved bodies". Examples include the Wildlife Trusts and the National Trust.

Pale

The ditch, bank and/or fence that was set up around the perimeter of the Forest to mark the boundary and retain game.

Rothschild Reserve

Between 1912 and 1915, Charles Rothschild, a banker and naturalist, conducted a survey of sites of conservation importance in England, with a view to setting up a nationwide network of nature reserves. The list, subsequently published in 1916, had 182 sites in England, now widely known as Rothschild's Reserves. These were considered the jewels in the crown of the English landscape. Ashdown Forest is one of those reserves.

Scheduled Monument

A scheduled monument is a site that is legally protected because of its historical importance.

Scrub

Scrub is a natural part of other habitats, such as grassland and woodland, and an important component of the landscape. It is usually formed of woody species and is a transitory habitat. It needs management to maintain it otherwise it will develop into woodland or can become invasive and reduce the biodiversity of a site. It is important to plan how it is going to be managed to ensure a balance with other features such as open habitat, species of conservation importance or geological features.

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

Area identified by Natural England and its predecessors under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949 for protection by reason of the rarity of its nature conservation, wildlife features or geological interest.

Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

This is a designation under the European Union's Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), also known as the Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora. The designation is to protect habitats and species listed in annex I and II of the directive which are of European interest. Ashdown Forest's SAC designation is due to it containing one of the largest single continuous blocks of lowland heath in south-east England, with both European dry heaths and, in a larger proportion, wet heath. The M16 Erica tetralix - Sphagnum compactum wet heath element provides suitable conditions for several species of bog-mosses Sphagnum spp., Bog asphodel, Deergrass, Common cotton-grass, Marsh gentian and Marsh dubmoos. The site supports important assemblages of beetles, dragonflies, damselflies and butterflies, including the nationally rare Silver-studded blue, and birds of European importance, such as European nightjar; Dartford warbler and Eurasian hobby.



Special Protection Area (SPA)

This is a designation under the European Union Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds. Under the Directive, Member States of the European Union have a duty to safeguard the habitats of migratory birds and certain particularly threatened birds. Together with Special Areas of Conservation, the SPAs form a network of protected sites across the EU, called Natura 2000. Ashdown Forest is designated for supporting over 1% of the UK national population for both Dartford warbler and European nightjar.

Statutory Corporation

This is the definition of the status of the Conservators of Ashdown Forest. This is a legislative solution that establishes a body to exercise statutory functions, where it has been decided that those functions should be exercised by a public authority, rather than by Ministers, an existing public authority or a voluntary or private sector body. The reasons for establishing a new body or office as a statutory corporation, rather than in another form, generally relate to the fact that a statutory corporation has its own legal personality distinct from that of the individual members or office holder; it can therefore enter into legal relations and hold property and continues to exist despite changes in the membership of the body.

Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANGs)

This is the name given to the green space that is of a quality and type suitable to be used as mitigation in the context of Special Protection Areas. The intention is to encourage visitors to visit these SANGs ahead of the SPA to reduce disturbance to the ground nesting bird species of the heath.

The Ashdown Forest Foundation (TAFF)

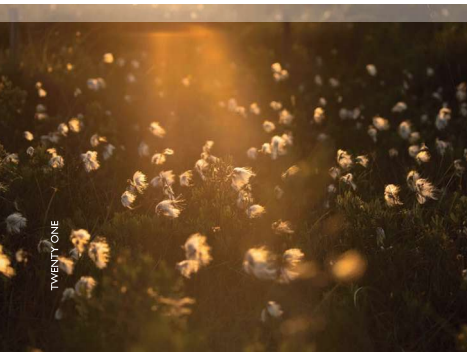
An independent charity established in 2018 to ensure the best possible future for the Forest by supporting the Conservators through engagement, education and philanthropy; the intention is to conserve the special landscape for public enjoyment whilst raising quality of life and well-being in the community. It is not involved in the day to day management of the Forest and in September 2021 has no staff albeit that it is considering employing fundraisers. www.register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search/charity-details/1115633/charity-overview

Valley Mire

These are areas of waterlogged peat in valley bottoms with characteristic acid wetland plant communities. They are not only found in valley bottoms but also natural basins and old mineral workings where peat has accumulated. They are often biodiversity gems and make valuable contributions to locking up climate changing gases. If they dry out, they can release both methane and carbon dioxide. On Ashdown Forest, they are home to some of the site's rarest plant species.

Wood-pasture

Wood pasture is made up of a mixture of habitats, from denser wooded groves to more open areas. Grazing is often involved in their management. These include old trees and large pieces of decaying wood. They often develop ancient and veteran trees which are full of holes, dead and rotting wood. They offer a range of homes for both widespread and rare species.



Strategic Partners



Ashdown Bird Group
Ashdown Forest Conservation Trust
The Ashdown Forest Foundation (TAFF)
Ashdown Forest Riders Association
Ashdown Forest Tourist Association
AONB High Weald Unit
Butterfly Conservation
Cleeve Common
City of London
CPRE, The Countryside Charity
(formerly known as the Campaign to Protect Rural England)
Commoners of Ashdown Forest
East Sussex County Council (ESCC)
Forestry Commission
Friends of Ashdown Forest
Girlguiding
Knepp Estate
London Youth
Malvern Hills
Ministry of Defence
Natural England
Parish and Town Councils around the Forest
Pippingford Park
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
Scouts Association
Sussex Botanical Recording Society
Sussex Local Nature Partnership
Sussex Wildlife Trust (SWT)
Wakehurst – Kew Gardens
Wealden District Council

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