

Parish Biodiversity Action Plan

This would include:

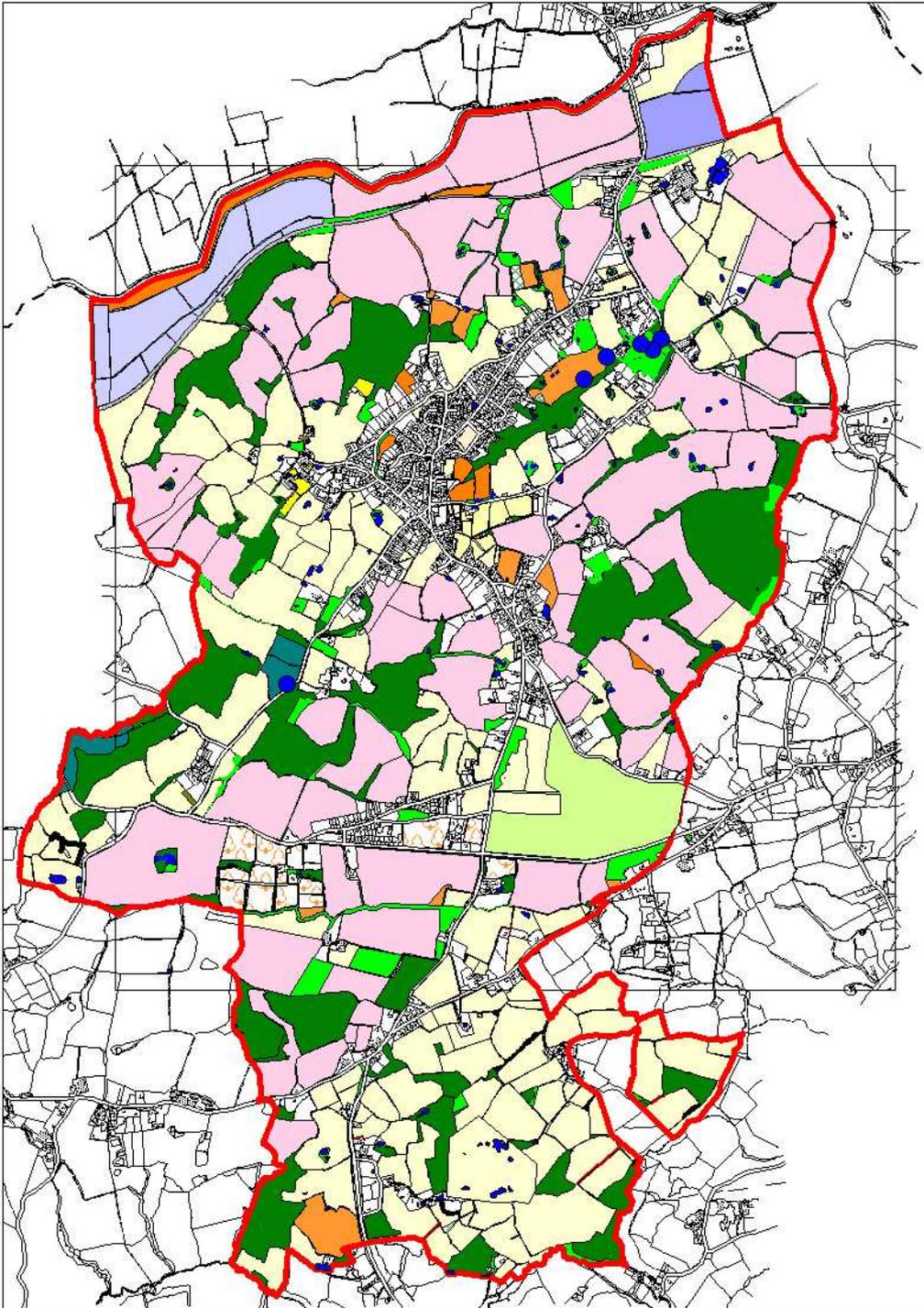
- A map showing which habitats are present in the Parish.
- Identify key “Habitats and species of importance for the Conservation of biodiversity” in the Parish, which Northiam Parish Council has a legal duty to consider in its work under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006). So chosen using official Government advice, not on a whim.
- Identify such habitats and species (where known) on land owned by the Parish Council.
- Recommend management to maintain or enhance them.
- Identify known sites of high wildlife value in the Parish.
- Produce plans to encourage conservation of key habitats and species in the Parish.
- Produce habitat management guidelines for Parish Council land, from which you might prepare simple habitat management plans.

See attached draft map showing habitats in Parish. This needs refining, it is prepared mainly from aerial photographs and online data such as maps showing Ancient Woodland. This is still being worked on and does not have a key, but as an example pink areas were arable, dark green is Ancient Woodland, etc.

Habitats of “principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity” include woodland, hedgerow, and ponds on St Francis Fields, where there is also the Northiam Conservation Society traditional orchard that is being restored, and where there is potential to restore wildflower meadows and new ponds.

Species of “principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity” that would be sensible to include in the plan could include hedgehog, great crested newt, house sparrow, bees (especially bumblebees and long-horned bee), some bat species and common spotted orchid. The latter species is not listed as a species of “principal importance”, but in Northiam it turns up on better managed grassland and lawn, a result of wind-blown seed from Great Dixter, and could be used as a proxy for better meadow management.

PTO.



Draft Parish habitat map. No key I am afraid yet, but pink is arable, and dark green Ancient Woodland. It needs a bit of quality control – ground truthing, to check for errors. From this I can tell you that:

75% of the Parish is of lower biological quality.

The remaining better 25% comprises woodland (21%), 2% rough grassland, wet grassland at the Newenden flood <1 %, more than 160 ponds <0.5%, species-rich unimproved grassland 0.1% and restored heritage orchard 0.1%