

Kingston Nature Recovery Opportunities Mapping Report Summary May 2023

Report by Wild Business Ltd for KPC, funded by SDNP.
Desk based research using publicly available data.

Nature recovery is the process of assisting the return of a greater diversity of life (biodiversity) and focusing on species native to the area and of conservation concern. Different nature recovery strategies can be applied from regenerative agriculture and sustainable afforestation to targeted habitat restoration and rewilding. In Sussex, the Local Nature Recovery Strategy is being developed by the [Sussex Local Nature Partnership](#) hosted by the East Sussex County Council

Summary of the Kingston Nature Recovery Opportunities Mapping Report:



Summary

- Nature recovery is important for halting and reversing biodiversity decline and to combat and adapt to climate change. In the parish, nature recovery will restore, expand and connect wildlife-rich habitats, with adjacent parishes and beyond, to meet regional and nation-wide goals.
- While Kingston near Lewes is fortunate to have protected and internationally important habitats and wildlife in the parish, and already in the process of restoring natural spaces in and around the village, there is also a lot of potential for further nature recovery.
- The most impactful nature restoration action might be connecting the wildlife rich areas by focusing on the expansion zones for calcareous grassland, intermittent with scrub or hedgerow habitat, and preserving, expanding, and restoring lowland meadow.
- The most achievable action in Kingston village is allowing sections of the grassland areas to grow, and introducing more diverse habitats in the Greens, the verges, and in gardens, in conjunction with recreation and people & nature areas.
- Retaining existing woodland and planting suitable, climate adaptable trees is key to help mitigate inevitable climate change *i.e.* employ natural solutions to reduce carbon and provide shade.
- Finally, while some good species records exist, more rigorous species distribution mapping and monitoring across the parish will form an important baseline, to know what's present, and upon which to measure the impact of restoration action.

Proposed Principles of nature recovery for Kingston

Principles of nature recovery for the village

Along with explicit nature recovery projects, the Parish Council could encourage villagers to adhere to biodiversity positive principles. The following are recommended and are adapted from the University of Sussex's Good Practice Biodiversity Principles:

1. **Plan for net gain:** Ensure that nature is recovering in the Parish by minimizing negative impacts and offsetting any negative impacts with nature recovery elsewhere.
2. **Aim to be a pesticide, peat and synthetic fertilizer free village:** Avoid these products to support biodiversity in the Village and beyond.
3. **Use water conscious planting practices:** Plant select species that do not have high water requirements.
4. **Leave deadwood:** Where safe to do so, leave standing and fallen deadwood, a vital resource to support biodiversity.
5. **Promote wildlife highways:** Encourage the use of hedges and create holes and gaps in fences to allow wildlife to move through the Village and beyond.
6. **Promote joined-up nature recovery projects:** For biodiversity bigger is better, so work together to create bigger wildlife gardens and spaces.



Within the parish boundary

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Kingston near Lewes

Area of Kingston parish identified from the historic parish boundary. The map includes land registry parcels within the Kingston boundary, local buildings, rivers, chalk streams, surface water, ancient trees, reedbeds, and green space, which includes public parks, allotments, cemeteries, and other community green spaces.

Total site area: 571 ha

Length of roads: 8.077 km

Area of recreational green space: 2.3 ha

St Pancras Green: 1.5 ha

The Village Green: 0.48 ha

St Pancras Church cemetery 0.22 ha

Tennis courts: 0.12 ha

Additional green areas:

Snednore: ~0.3 ha

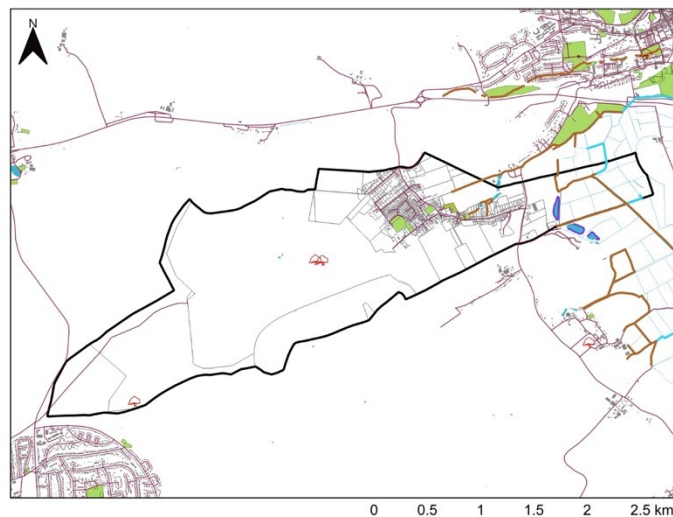
Community Wildlife Garden: 0.03 ha

School Playing Fields: ~0.5 ha

Area of blue space: 2.5 ha

Length of rivers: 665 m

Length of chalk streams: 1246 m



KEY

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| Parish Outline | Chalk Streams | Community Garden |
| Land Registry Parcels in Kingston | Rivers | School Playing Fields |
| Local Buildings | Surface Water | |
| Roads | Green Space | |
| Ancient/veteran tree | Reedbed | |

Ancient/veteran trees and reedbed data supplied by Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre. Land Registry Parcels from The Land App. Chalk Rivers supplied by Natural England Open Data. Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0. and Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database rights 2023.

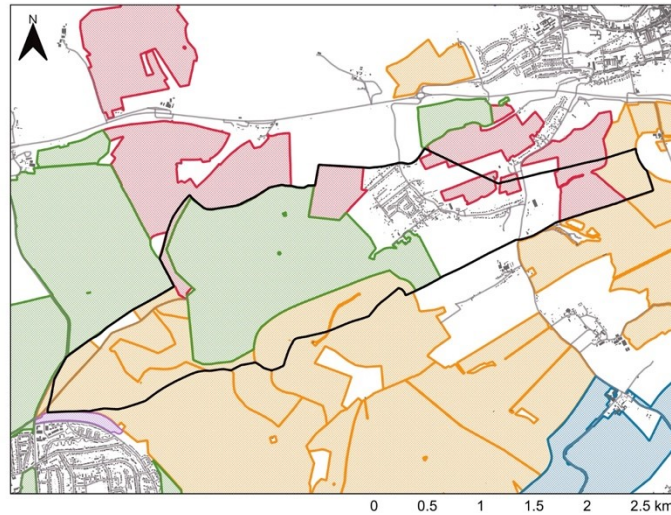
Large Landowners

Most of Kingston parish is farmland, owned by a small number of large landowners. This land is under various agricultural stewardship schemes. Most of the environmental management of this land is decided by these stewardship schemes. Therefore, a large proportion of the open ground in the parish is or has been covered by Countryside Stewardship scheme agreements and is being managed with nature in mind.

THE SITE Stewardship

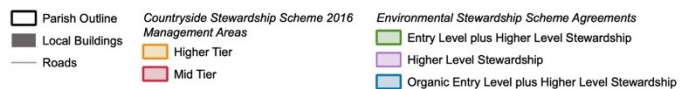
This map includes all land under management within the Countryside Stewardship Agri-Environment Scheme from 2016 onwards and the Environmental Stewardship scheme. These schemes provide financial incentives for farmers, foresters and land managers to look after and improve the environment. More information is available [here](#).

The Countryside Stewardship Scheme is being transitioned into the new Environmental Land Management scheme (ELMs). Within ELMs Countryside Stewardship is the second tier grant of a 3 tier system and “will pay for more targeted actions relating to specific locations, features and habitats. There will be an extra incentive through CS Plus for land managers to join up across local areas to deliver bigger and better results.” More information about ELMs is available [here](#).



Countryside Stewardship Scheme and Environmental Stewardship Scheme Agreements (England) data supplied by Natural England.

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Wildlife Sites

48% of the parish are Natural England Priority Habitats, including over 100 hectares of Lowland Calcareous Grassland. The parish has Wildlife Sites which are not protected by law

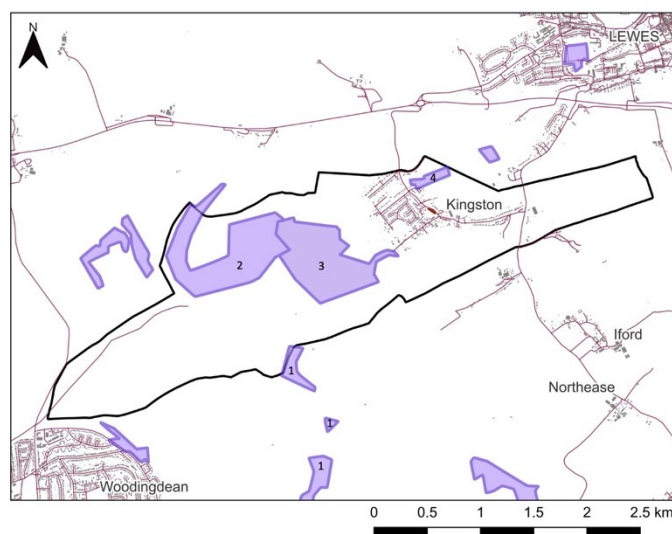
THE SITE Recognised Local Wildlife Sites

This map shows Local Wildlife Sites (formerly known as SNCIs - Sites of Nature Conservation Importance). These are wildlife-rich sites that are recognised by the Sussex Local Wildlife Sites Initiative for their local nature conservation value. They can contain important, distinctive and threatened habitats and species. However, their designation is non-statutory and their only protection comes via the planning system; they are not protected by law like SSSIs.

Local Wildlife Sites in Kingston:

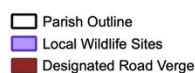
1. Balsdean Bottom Downs (10 ha)
2. Cold Coombes (56.8 ha)
3. Kingston Escarpment (14.4 ha)
4. Kingston Hollow (2 ha)

Designated Road Verge: Ashcombe Lane.



Local Wildlife Sites and Designated Road Verges data supplied by Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre on behalf of Sussex Local Wildlife Sites Initiative and local authorities. Polygons have been created by Wild Business Ltd.

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Sites which are protected by law.

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Current protected areas

This map shows the currently designated protected areas within and around the Parish boundary.

Kingston parish is totally contained within both the South Downs National Park and Brighton and Lewes Downs UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.

Castle Hill Nature Reserve is classified as both an SSSI and SAC, and part of it is a National Nature Reserve as well, hence the different regions overlay each other.

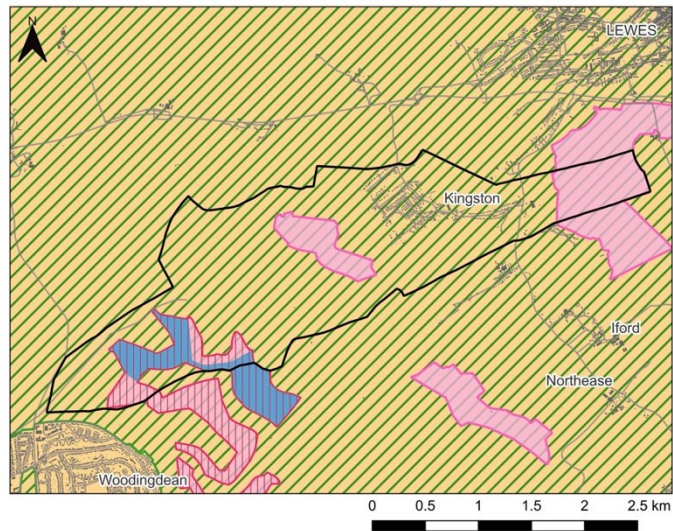
Total site area: 571 ha

SSSI areas: 107 ha (19% of Kingston)

Castle Hill: 43 ha (Total SSSI: 115 ha, 38% in Kingston)
Kingston Escarpment & Iford Hill: 26.5 ha (Total SSSI: 63 ha, 42% of SSSI in Kingston)
Lewes Brookes: 37 ha (Total SSSI: 339 ha, 11% in Kingston)

SAC areas: 43 ha (7.6% of Kingston)

National Nature Reserve: 26 ha (4.5% of Kingston)



National Nature Reserves, Local Nature Reserves, National Parks, UNESCO Biosphere Reserves, SSSI, SAC and SPA data supplied by Natural England.

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Biodiversity Recording

The Parish is rich in biodiversity though species recording is inconsistent.

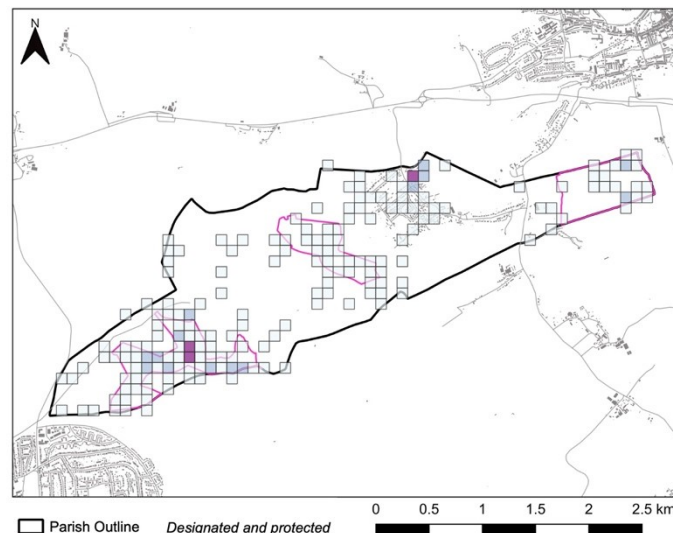
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Species Richness

The number of different protected or designated species recorded and sent to the Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre between 1980 and 2022 in 100m² grid areas across Kingston parish (excluding birds and bats).

These records include invertebrates, fungi, lichens, amphibians, reptiles, terrestrial mammals and reptiles.

These records are not part of a systematic survey, and so are an indication of where designated and protected species are being found and being looked for and recorded. As a result, records are concentrated in the protected areas where recorders are likely to focus their efforts, but also in Kingston village itself where recorders might be spending more time.



Species data supplied by Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre.

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Recreational Green Spaces

In the village there are 2.5 ha of recreational green space in St Pancras Green, The Village Green, St Pancras Green Cemetery, and the Community Wildlife Garden. Roadside verges

and green spaces bordering footpaths in the village also offer habitat and nature recovery opportunities. A small patch of roadside verge along Ashcombe Lane is designated for its wildlife interest. While the parish has a wealth of nature, much of this is in the background and accessible via paths on steep slopes. Nature recovery in the village could support greater human – nature connection. Wilder gardens are another opportunity to increase vegetation structure, habitat diversity and connectivity.

There are 4 main types of nature recovery:

Targeted restoration is the process of using human intervention (i.e. nature recovery actions) to recreate or accelerate the recovery of a specific community of species. If nature is considered to be degraded in a particular place, an assessment is made to determine which communities of species could be present and which would be the most valuable to restore. For Kingston, the restoration of calcareous grassland is an important goal, but restoration of lowland meadows, coastal flood plain grazing marsh, hedges, traditional orchards, and broadleaved woodland would be appropriate as well.

Rewilding is a nature recovery strategy that prioritises the restoration of a diverse, resilient, and self-sustaining ecosystem without aiming to support specific species or habitats. It is an approach that focuses on the restoration of ecological processes (e.g. pollination and grazing), allowing nature to take care of itself. Rewilding can be done simply by reducing the control people exert over nature in a specific place, e.g. simply stop mowing, planting, fertilising, and ploughing a site, this is known as Passive Rewilding. Passive rewilding can be applied at any scale, for e.g. allowing scrub to develop in a garden or park which provides important shelter and habitat for many species, particularly song birds.

Sustainable afforestation is the creation of woodland that benefits people and nature in the long term. In appropriate places, planting diverse communities of native tree species (or simply allowing trees to grow where they plant themselves), that are adapted to the current and future environment, can provide important habitat for wildlife and a wide variety of benefits to people.

Regenerative agriculture is a diverse concept, but primarily aims to produce food with lower costs, or broader net benefits to people and nature. The agricultural land in Kingston is primarily used for livestock, which is associated with higher carbon storage on soils overlaying chalk. While the livestock produce greenhouse gases, grazing is important for the conservation of biodiversity on calcareous grassland, lowland meadows, and flood plain marsh, so producing meat and biodiversity conservation goals are aligned