



Gamlingay Parish Biodiversity Audit

CONSULTATION VERSION
FEBRUARY 2026

“I happened to be thinking the other day over the Gamlingay trip to the Lilies of the Valley: ah, those were delightful days”

Letter from Charles Darwin written at The Lodge, Malvern on 6 May 1849
to his mentor, JS Henslow

During Darwin’s undergraduate years, he and other young naturalists went on several entomological and botanical excursions to Gamlingay with Henslow, popular because of the special heathland species associated with Gamlingay Great Heath.

Cover image: The main ride in Gamlingay Wood in early Spring – the most important site for nature in our Parish.

Authorship: This Consultation Draft has been prepared by Emma Leaf-Grimshaw and Gwyn Williams under the leadership of Kirstin Rayner, Clerk to Gamlingay Parish Council.

Gamlingay Parish Biodiversity Audit - Summary

About this Audit and this Consultation

The UK is one of the most nature depleted countries in the world, primarily due to the impact of human activity over many centuries. Gamlingay is a microcosm of a much larger challenge – its nature influenced and steadily eroded by agricultural land use and urbanisation for over ten centuries.

Under the ‘biodiversity’ duty contained in the Environment Act 2021, all public bodies in England, including Parish Councils, must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity. Your Parish Council has prepared this Audit in fulfilment of this requirement.

It is presented in two parts: Sections 1-4 are factual, describing the resource that we once had and now have; how legislation has been applied and other work done to protect nature in our Parish, and, who is positioned to act. We are very open to receiving any comments or corrections on this analysis.

Sections 5 & 6, the main focus of this consultation, is propositional. It sets out a series of 25 detailed actions that we believe would do much to protect and restore nature in our Parish. Many of these nest within the strategic actions identified in the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy. For this consultation, we have grouped the 25 actions identified into 10 overarching ‘umbrella’ actions.

10 Umbrella Actions for Nature in Gamlingay Parish

- 1) *Look after woodlands – protect them and manage them well.*
- 2) *Expand woodland cover, especially to buffer and connect existing woodlands.*
- 3) *Ensure best management of remnant acid grassland/heath at Gamlingay Cinques and other species rich grasslands.*
- 4) *Enhance management of water courses to create nature rich corridors through the landscape.*
- 5) *Enhance the quality of arable farmland for nature.*
- 6) *Enhance connectivity through arable farmland eg: through restoration of hedgerows.*
- 7) *Protect village green space. Enhance the residential and other built areas of the parish for nature. Plant more trees - adopt a target, perhaps aiming for 20% canopy cover.*
- 8) *Reduce light pollution from street lighting and private external residential lighting.*
- 9) *Create more opportunities for our community to gather and do great things for nature.*
- 10) *Create more opportunities for people to access and enjoy nature e.g. through creation of more footpaths to provide circular routes to explore the Parish.*

Overleaf, is a summary table indicating who might take these actions forward

	Protected Areas	Who is responsible ?	Action
1	Gamlingay Wood SSSI	BCN Wildlife Trust; Natural England	1
2	Gamlingay Heath Plantation	Private landowners	2
3	New Barn Grassland	Private landowners	
4	Stocks Lane Cemetery	Gamlingay PC	7
5	Cinques Common	B&C Wildlife Trust and GPC	3
6	Disused railway east of Long Lane	Private landowners	3
7	Protected verge West Rd	Cambridgeshire CC	Destroyed?
8	Gamlingay East	Cambridgeshire CC	3
9	Gamlingay Long Lane	Cambridgeshire CC	3
	Priority Habitats		
10	Acid Grassland/ Heath	BCN Wildlife Trust and GPC	3
11	Springs and streams	Riparian owners, Bedford & Ivel IDB and GPC	4
12	Arable farmland	Private landowners; Defra	5,6
13	Urban semi-public and public open spaces	GPC, Gamlingay Primary,	7,8
14	Urban - Residential & gardens	Residents	7,8
15	Access to nature	Landowners	10

Gamlingay Parish Biodiversity Audit

Consultation Version February 2026

Section 1. Why Nature Matters?

The UK is recognised as one of the most nature depleted countries in the world, primarily due to the impact of human activity over many centuries. Gamlingay is a microcosm of a much larger challenge – its nature influenced and steadily eroded by agricultural land use and urbanisation for over ten centuries. We contend that this matters, both for nature and people

1.1 Reasons for the protection and restoration of nature fall into two broad categories.

- The first is around the **intrinsic** value of nature – that humanity has a moral responsibility to care for our shared environment and has no right to cause the extinction of other species – indeed, that the prevention of the loss of species and their associated habitats is a mark of a civilised society.
- The second category is **utilitarian**, the need to conserve nature as a provider of ecosystem services on which humanity depends. The natural assets providing these services are sometimes described as natural capital, alongside the economic and social capital that our society is based on. Many of these assets, such as clean air and water, are held in common and not owned, or are under huge pressure due to poor regulation.

1.2 There are four main groups of services:

- **Regulating services** such as the purification of water and air, carbon sequestration and climate regulation, waste decomposition, pollination, and disturbance regulation, such as flood alleviation.
- **Provisioning services**, the products obtained from ecosystems, such as food, raw materials (timber, skins), genetic resources (e.g. crop improvement genes and health care), energy (hydro and biomass).
- **Cultural services**, cultural, spiritual, historical and recreational experiences, scientific, educational and therapeutic – with growing understanding of the way in which contact with nature and greenspace enhances human wellbeing.
- **Support services**, such as nutrient recycling and the primary production of organic matter through photosynthesis and chemosynthesis.

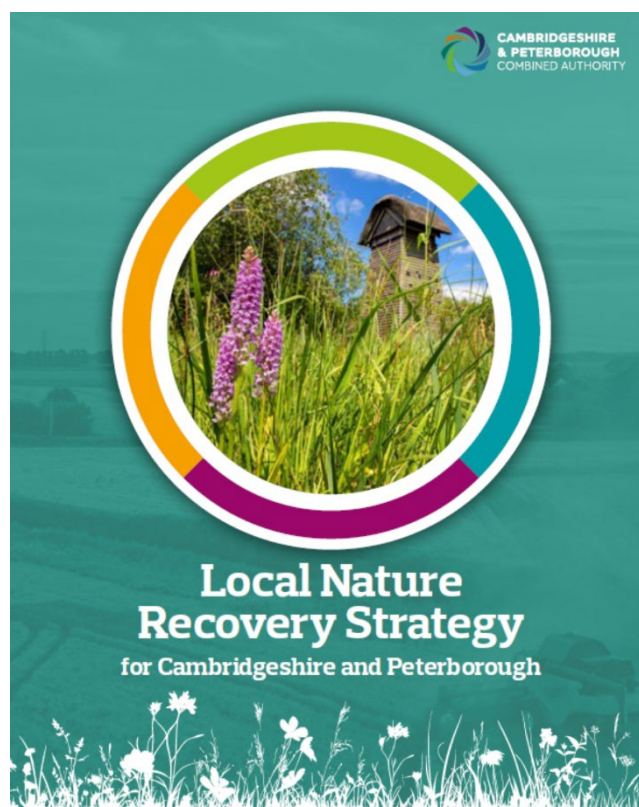
1.3 In recent decades, international and national legislative frameworks have been created, such as the 1993 'Rio' Convention on Biological Diversity to seek concerted and co-ordinated action to protect, restore and recreate the natural environment on which we all depend, to address the challenge of creating action from local to global such that humanity no longer depletes the environmental resources on which we all depend. And that 'nature' is no longer seen as a blockage in the way of 'progress'.

1.4 This report is a contribution to this process. Under the 'biodiversity' duty contained in the Environment Act 2021, all public bodies in England, including Parish Councils, must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity. Government guidance published on 17 May 2023 clarifies that, as a public authority, town and parish councils must:

- consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- agree policies and specific objectives based on their consideration.
- act to deliver their policies and achieve their objectives.

1.5 This Audit has been prepared in parallel with the preparation of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (C&P LNRS), the consultation draft of which was published in August 2025. We have drawn on this Strategy in the compilation of this Audit and welcome Action U5C of Theme 6 Action for Urban Landscapes to 'support local communities to develop their own local nature recovery plans that identify, protect and restore sites, habitats and species found in their local area'.

1.6 This Audit was prepared between Spring 2024 and Autumn 2025. It is fortuitous that this has coincided with the release of the LNRS, so they can be read and assessed together. Actions proposed in this Audit have been cross-referenced with LRNS actions.



Section 2: The Nature of Gamlingay – an Introduction

Human land-use has shaped the landscape of the Parish of Gamlingay for centuries. Today, the Parish contains one site of national importance – Gamlingay Wood. A second nationally important habitat that supported many rare species, the lowland heathland of Gamlingay Great Heath, was destroyed during Victorian times. In amongst the heavily modified human landscapes of the parish are some important remnant semi-natural habitats both within and outside of nature reserves. Some of these habitats are rare in a local context and as such give Gamlingay a distinctive landscape and natural character. The wider landscape also supports important species in national decline, such as skylark, house sparrow and probably water vole.

2.1 The parish of Gamlingay lies at the junction of two landscapes, now identified by Natural England as falling within two ‘Natural Character Areas’. The eastern half of the parish is within the ‘Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands’ area and the western half is within the ‘Bedfordshire Greensand Ridge’ area.

2.2 The Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands NCA is described as ‘a broad, gently undulating, lowland plateau dissected by shallow river valleys that gradually widen as they approach The Fens NCA in the east’. The Bedfordshire Greensand Ridge NCA is a ‘narrow ridge running north-east, south-west, rising out of – and entirely surrounded by – the Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands NCA’. Its distinctive north-west facing scarp slope is outside our Parish, but the outcrop extends to the southeast, creating an area of acidic soils.’

2.3 Human land-use has shaped the landscape of the Parish for centuries. The current pattern can be traced back to the manorial pre-enclosure landscape of c750 years ago, when Gamlingay was based on a rural economy of open-field communal agriculture, described vividly in James Brown’s book *Gamlingay*. The Parish was divided into three large open field systems cultivated in strips. Land was managed by freemen and a greater number of ‘villeins’ - unfree customary tenants who were obliged to provide their landlords services as well as rent. At the heart of the Parish was the village, including St Mary’s, manorial houses and cottages.

2.4 This pattern of land use sustained some important natural habitats. The area of woodland was limited, but the ancient semi-natural woodland of Gamlingay Wood, first recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086, was valued as it provided fuel and construction timber, and grazing for pigs, known as ‘pannage’, supporting a rich flora and fauna. Together with other nationally significant semi-natural woodlands in adjacent parishes such as Cockayne Hatley Wood, Potton Wood, White Wood, Weaveley and Sand Woods, Hatley Wood and Waresley Wood it forms part of an important woodland network for wildlife in a larger area which overall is relatively low in woodland cover.



Coppicing continues to play a key role in the management of Gamlingay Wood, as it would have done centuries ago

2.5 Likewise, Gamlingay Great Heath was valued as it provided common land grazing for cottagers, and possibly furze for animal bedding and roofing. This area of open acidic heathland would have been a mixture of acidic grassland and heather, but it was relatively low-lying and supported several springs that fed areas of acidic bog, that would have extended into Bedfordshire and the neighbouring parish of Potton. The Great Heath supported a very special flora, and due to the low-lying nature of this area and the springs some of this area would have been acidic bog, akin to the valley mires of the New Forest and a rare habitat in Eastern England.

2.6 Gamlingay Great Heath was well known to a range of distinguished C19th Cambridgeshire naturalists who visited the area see and record these botanical rarities, including J.S. Henslow, and his student Charles Darwin, Rev. Leonard Jenyns, and C.C. Babington. This includes species now extinct in Cambridgeshire, such as the Bog Orchid (you would now have to travel to the New Forest or Lake District to find one!). Natterjack toads were also reported to be 'in considerable abundance' here in the 1820s by Jenyns, and Gamlingay Cinques holds the dubious honour of probably being the last site in Cambridgeshire to support this species before it was lost.

2.7 Gamlingay was one of the last parishes in England to be enclosed, mainly because no manor held sufficient land to make it worthwhile to seek the Private Act of Parliament needed to permit it. Post 1836, this requirement was dispensed with, and in 1844 Commissioners were appointed to parcel out new large fields with straight boundaries and replace the old higgledy-piggledy medieval furlongs and strips. A few old enclosures remained around the village, used as allotments by small farmers who eventually became market gardeners. Public roads were clearly defined and given verges. By 1850, the Great Heath had largely been brought into cultivation. In 1862 it was reported that the last remaining portion of bog had been drained and planted with potatoes.

2.8 Brickmaking emerged as a new source of employment. Bricks had probably always been made in the village, but the best brickearth was to be found under the Great Heath, on common land. After enclosure, this became available for exploitation, and two works were set up. The largest of which was the 'Bellevue Brickworks', that by 1912 covered 31 acres in a huge pit. Some of the water filled pits remain.

2.9 Farming remained the main land use and source of work in the village, although markedly changed as arable cropping with wheat, barley and oats at scale was introduced. Farmed land continued to support a vibrant population of farmland nature, especially birds such as corn bunting, skylark and grey partridge, mammals such as brown hare and wildflowers.



Grey Partridge, Fullers Hill. Their UK population has declined by 92% since 1967

This changed dramatically as farming became more specialised and intensive post WWII. Cultivation systems became more mechanised, and the use of fertilisers and agro chemicals increased and interrupted complex food webs.

2.10 Remnants of distinctive acidic grassland habitat remained in the parish holding species either rare or not found in the rest of Cambridgeshire, including Gamlingay Cinques Common and Gamlingay Meadow on the south side of the Gamlingay Heath plantation.

2.11 The most significant watercourse in the Parish is Millbridge Brook, a stream which runs from the eastern side of the parish around the edge of the village and then south to Potton, and that has supported water vole and water shrew. Springs also arise near Gamlingay Cinques that flow south beside the Greenacres estate before joining the Brook.

2.12 Well into the 1930's the urban area of Gamlingay changed relatively little. This altered from the late 1950s on, as new housing, shops and schools were built to support a growing population many relocating from the London area. Many of the old village post-enclosure allotments were built on. But areas of garden and public greenspace continue to support nature. House Sparrows are an obvious village bird, apparently doing well in Gamlingay, despite a national decline of over 50% in the last 25 years. In contrast, summer migrants such as House Martin and Swift are now in deep trouble, associated with the decline in insects on which they depend for food. It is difficult to believe there were over 100 pairs of house martins breeding on the Greenacres estate four decades ago!

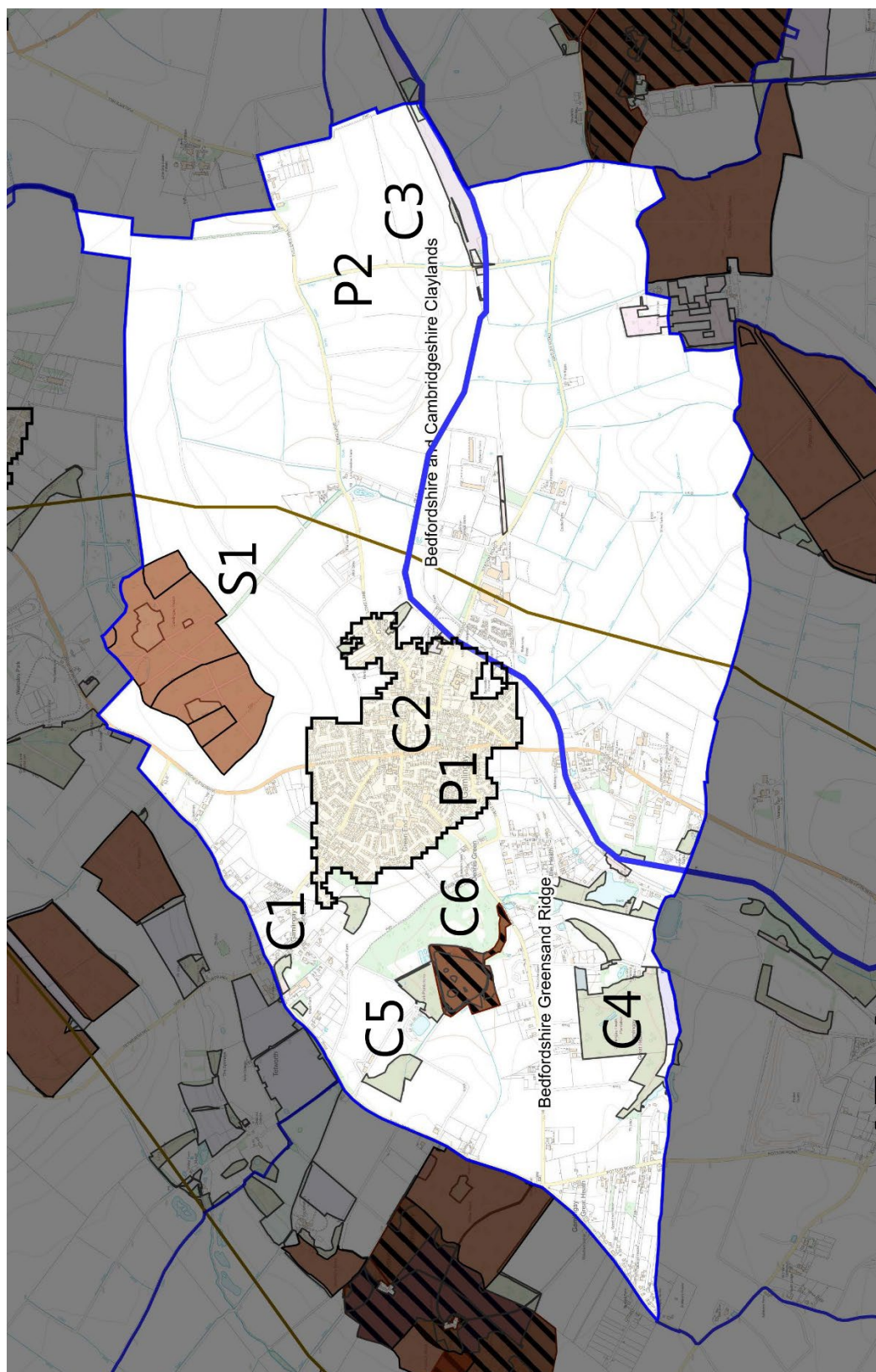
2.13 On the plus side, the ban on use of organochlorine biocides such as DDT and dieldrin in the 1980s and a decline in illegal persecution since has allowed the return of species such as sparrowhawk, buzzard, red kite and raven, now breeding again in the Parish. Cambridgeshire also retains an important population of elm trees post Dutch Elm disease, due to the diversity of elm species it holds - the highest Britain and perhaps the world, with as many as 62 distinct species (Eversham 2021). Elm remains a common woodland, roadside and hedgerow tree, supporting other invertebrates that also declined along with the elms they depended on, such as the White-spotted Pinion and Square-spotted Clay moths.



Red Kite – one of the winners!

Driven to a low of 4-10 pairs in the 1930s through persecution, poisoning and egg collecting, red kite recovery took off through re-introduction programmes in England & Scotland from 1989 on. Kites started to colonise our area from 1997 and are now regular breeders. The use of toxic chemicals that were being laid to kill foxes and crows as part of game bird rearing having largely removed from the lowland countryside.

Map 1: Location of sites formally identified for nature in Gamlingay Parish (see table 3.4).



Legend. **Sites of Special Scientific Interest:** S1 Gamlingay Wood. **County Wildlife Sites:** C1 Cinques Common; C2 Stocks Lane Cemetery; C3 Sandy-Cambridge Disused Railway, E of Long Road; C4 Heath Plantation; C5 New Barn Grassland; C6 Heath Plantation. **Protected Road Verges:** P1 West Road; P2 Long Road. The brown line bisecting the Parish indicates the boundary between the two **Natural Character Areas** that it is part of: the Bedfordshire Greensand to the west and Bedfordshire & Cambridge Claylands to the east.

Section 3: Audit. The Nature of Gamlingay.

Important areas of remnant nature rich habitats in Gamlingay Parish have largely been identified and designated. In total, one statutory and nine non-statutory sites have been created, covering 87.02ha, 6.7% of the Parish area. It is not clear as to the extent non-statutory sites, especially Protected Road Verges, are under appropriate management. In addition, Gamlingay holds 68 Biodiversity Action Plan species, listed as priorities for conservation action due to the speed of their decline. Many will be associated with identified sites, but others are 'wider countryside' species, associated with farmland or village habitats.

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Since the passage of the Convention on Biological Diversity at Rio in 1993, and the UK's response to implement its requirements through the UK Biodiversity Action Plan, conservation efforts have focussed on protecting, enhancing and restoring habitat types of high nature value – especially those in rapid decline in area or quality, as well as species in rapid decline, that require intervention over and above their preferred habitats – so moving away from a previous emphasis on rarity, that may have focussed actions on edge of range species, or species that were rare, but their status was stable. For England, policies for the conservation of nature were further set out in the England Biodiversity Action Plan.

3.1.2 To enable implementation of these requirements Government has published, as required under S41 of the Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006, a list of habitats and species of principal importance in England that the Environment Secretary must take reasonable steps to conserve and promote the taking of such steps by others. A total of 56 habitats and 943 species of principal importance were included on the Section 41 list, issued in 2013.

3.1.3 These national initiatives have been translated into more local commitments through Local Biodiversity Action Plans, the South Cambridgeshire DC Special Planning Document of 2009 and, more recently, Local Nature Recovery Strategies arising from the Environment Act 2021, that includes the emergent Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

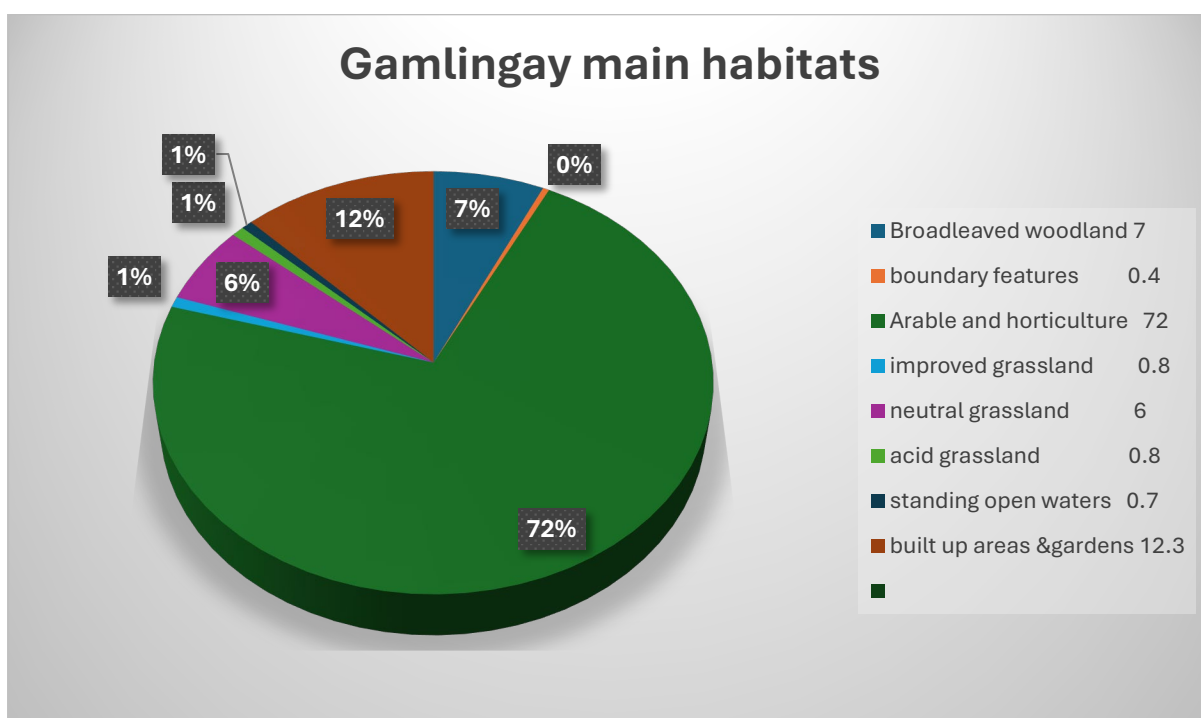
3.2 Outputs

3.2.1 In this Audit, we have adopted the basic 'currency' of habitats and species and screened the S41 NERC Act list of species and habitats to identify the assets in our Parish that are of especial importance. We have also added priorities identified by local initiatives, although have omitted those such as 'Churchyards' which arguably relate more to ownership, rather than being a description of the habitat present.

3.2.2 Table 3.1 presents a list of the Broad Habitats found in our Parish, together with an estimate of their area and percentage land cover.

Table 3.1: Extent of UK Biodiversity Action Plan Broad Habitats relevant to Gamlingay Parish

Broad Habitat	Area (ha) or Length (m)	Percentage land cover of Parish
Broadleaved, mixed & yew woodland	91.75 ha	7%
Coniferous woodland		
Boundary & linear features	5.56 ha	0.4%
Arable & horticulture	936 ha	72%
Improved grassland	11.2 ha	0.8%
Neutral grassland	77 ha	6%
Acid grassland	10.8 ha	0.8%
Standing open waters	9.7 ha	0.7%
Rivers & streams	8047.6 m	
Built up areas & gardens	161.4 ha	12.3%



3.2.3 Table 3.2 presents a list of the Priority S41 Habitats of Principal Importance in England, found in our Parish, that we would expect to be the focus of conservation activity, including their protection, enhanced management or recreation.

Table 3.2: UK Biodiversity Action Plan Broad Habitats with Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 Habitats of Principal Importance in England, retrieved 2022, relevant to Gamlingay Parish

Broad Habitat	S41 NERC Habitat	Exemplars in Gamlingay
Broadleaved, mixed & yew woodland	Lowland mixed deciduous woodland	Gamlingay Wood
	Wood pasture & parkland	Gamlingay Park?
	Traditional orchards	
Coniferous woodland		
Boundary & linear features	Hedgerows	
Arable & horticulture	Arable field margins	
Improved grassland	Floodplain grazing marsh	None?
Neutral grassland	Lowland meadows	Old Railway Cutting
Acid grassland	Lowland dry acid grassland	Gamlingay Heath Meadow; Cinques Meadow
Standing open waters	Eutrophic Standing Waters	Gamlingay Park Lake; Little Heath Brick Pits
	Ponds	
Rivers & streams	Rivers	Millbrook & tributaries
Built up areas & gardens		
Note. South Cambs in its Biodiversity SPD of January 2009 adopted its version of BAP Priority Habitats that despite its title did not align with England guidance: Rivers & Streams; Woodland; Scrub; Old Orchards; Hedgerows; Farmland (arable); Ponds; Churchyards & Cemeteries; Lowland Calcareous Grassland; Meadows & Pastures.		

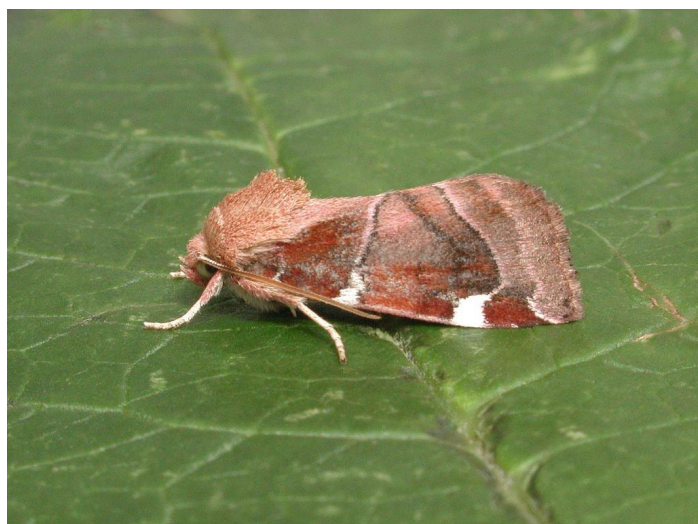
3.2.4 Table 3.3 provides a summary of the list of Priority S41 Species of Principal Importance in England recorded in our Parish. The complete list is presented at Annex 1. Some species will have been recorded more frequently than others. Many of the species listed also enjoy specific legal protection, for example from taking or hunting or the destruction of nests or roosting sites.

3.2.5 In most cases, conservation effort would be delivered through protection and management of their habitats; Biodiversity Habitat Action Plan listing is largely about seeking to ensure that these generic actions take account of the priority species associated with them. Also, the habitat of a Priority Species may not have been identified as a priority, whilst dependant species has. An obvious example are farmland birds, where the habitat they use is not necessarily of intrinsic ecological value.

3.2.6 Some species may have reached such a critical level that dedicated species-specific actions may be necessary. Examples include mink control to support the recovery of water vole and work that Butterfly Conservation has initiated in the Cambridge area to increase the number of elms to help recover White-spotted Pinion moth, following a steep decline in numbers and range due to the impact of Dutch Elm disease on its food plant.

Table 3.3: Summary of S41 NERC Act Priority Biodiversity Action Plan Species Recorded in Gamlingay Parish. Adapted from UKBAP species recorded in Cambridgeshire, Cambs Local Records Centre

Group	Number of species	Key species
Terrestrial mammals	5	Barbastelle Bat, Brown Hare, Brown long-eared bat, Water Vole, West European Hedgehog
Birds	14	Corn Bunting, House Sparrow, Skylark, Song Thrush
Herptiles: amphibians	2	Common Toad, Great Crested Newt
Herptiles: reptiles	2	Common Lizard, Grass Snake
Terrestrial invertebrates: beetles	1	
Terrestrial invertebrates: moths	42	White-spotted Pinion
Vascular plants	2	



White-spotted Pinion Moth

Underwent a decline of over 95% because of Dutch elm disease during the 1970s, so now a priority species for conservation action. Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire & Essex is now its stronghold. The larvae feed on the foliage of English Elm. The key conservation action is to retain healthy elm trees wherever possible. Even single mature trees are of very high conservation importance.

3.3 Designations

3.3.1 This section sets on how national and local organisations have assessed Gamlingay's nature, and applied the protective mechanisms open to them, such as statutory and non-statutory designations and land purchase. We have identified (four) main designations, and their use and purpose are summarised in Table 3.4. They are:

- **Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).** Application ('notification') of SSSI status by Natural England to a site shows that it is of national importance, one of c4,100 places intended to protect and ensure their sound management and restoration to favourable condition, using powers set out in the Wildlife and Countryside Acts. These are influential in the determination of development applications affecting sites, as well as the use and

management of sites by owners and occupiers, including access to incentives to encourage positive management.

- **County Wildlife Site (CWSs).** Identified by The Wildlife Trusts, County Wildlife Sites are the most important places for nature in Cambridgeshire outside the legally protected network. There are c470 across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Policies supporting their protection are contained in local and neighbourhood plans, and sustaining their management is also a requirement of land managers accessing farm subsidies.
- **Protected Road Verges (PRVs)** - First designated in the 1980s to conserve the best areas of grassland along the road network, they are now often the only areas of nature rich grassland in an intensively farmed arable landscape, remnants of habitat that was once more extensive. Managed by Cambridgeshire CC with support from BCNWT, there are c68 PRVs across the county. Their main purpose is to influence the mowing regime – usually to help ensure that mowing is not carried out during the summer flowering period.

Table 3.4: Formally Identified Sites for Nature in Gamlingay Parish		
Designation	Area & Interest	Status
Sites of Special Scientific Interest		
Gamlingay Wood	48.43ha. Ancient Broadleaved Woodland, with rich ground flora.	Unfavourable recovering, under restoration through ownership and management by BCN Wildlife Trust
County Wildlife Sites		
Gamlingay Cinques Common	2.34ha	
Gamlingay Stocks Lane Cemetery	0.82ha	
Sandy-Cambridge Disused Railway (east of Long Road)	3.27ha	
Gamlingay Heath Plantation	25.45ha	
New Barn Grassland	5.33ha	
Gamlingay Park, Heath Rd		
Protected Road Verges that are also County Wildlife Sites		
West Road (also CWS)	0.09ha	Destroyed?
Gamlingay East (also CWS)	0.6ha	
Protected Road Verge alone		
Gamlingay Long Road		

- **Ancient Tree Inventory (ATI).** Maintained by the Woodland Trust, the [inventory](https://ati.woodlandtrust.org.uk/) holds records of ancient, veteran and notable trees located in the UK and Ireland, important both in their own right and for the diversity of other plant and animal species they support.
 - *Ancient trees* are trees are those is in the third and final stage of their life. How old an ancient tree depends on the species. Some species can live longer than others with yews, oaks and sweet chestnuts topping the age charts at over 1000 years.
 - *Veteran trees* have some of the features found on an ancient tree but won't have their great age. And whilst they are not as old as ancient trees, they're still incredibly important and will become the ancient trees of the future.
 - *Notable trees* are usually mature trees which may stand out in the local environment because they are large in comparison with other trees around them.

At present, it seems very likely that the presence of these special trees is under recorded from our Parish, as only two notable trees are recorded from our Parish (Table 3.4).

Table 3.5: Trees of Note in Gamlingay Parish listed on the Ancient Tree Inventory See https://ati.woodlandtrust.org.uk/					
Species	Girth	Status	Site	Grid Ref	I/d number
Cherry	1.75m	Notable	Village Centre Garden	TL23805225	66253
Pedunculate Oak	3.8m	Notable	Verge, Heath Rd/Soule Croft	TL2334552070	263432

- **Tree Preservation Orders.** Local Planning Authorities may make a tree preservation order (TPO) legally protects individual trees, groups of trees, areas, or woodlands that are in danger if it appears to them to be 'expedient in the interest of amenity to make provision for the preservation of trees or woodlands in their area' – in other words, a tree or group of trees that are considered to benefit a location, and so give public enjoyment. A list of TPO's made in Gamlingay Parish is given at Appendix 2.

If there is a TPO on a tree, permission from South Cambs DC before doing any work, including cutting it down, cutting back its branches or digging near its roots. Doing any work on a protected tree without permission is against the law, punishable by a fine of up to £20,000.

3.4 Conclusion

3.4.1 As would have been expected from a rural, largely agricultural Parish, **arable** land dominates land use, together with its associated hedgerow boundary features and field margins. In general, this area is under conventional intensive management, holding low densities of BAP priority farmland species such as Brown Hare, Corn Bunting and Skylark.

3.4.2 **Woodland** occupies a surprisingly large area of the Parish, including not only the ancient woodland of Gamlingay Wood, but more recent woodlands such as the Great Heath Plantation planted in Victorian times, and 1980's to present day extension at Little Heath Farm, and other

recent regenerated/planted woodlands, such as those to the west of Park Lane and north of Elizabeth Way. Together, they hold the most significant species interest in our Parish.

3.4.3 Although not a BAP species, the Parish holds an important population of Elms that survived Dutch Elm disease, some in woodlands, some as boundary trees and hedging, which support BAP species that declined along with their host tree, of which the White-spotted Pinion Moth is an example.



Creation of the Pocket Forest in Millbridge Brook Meadows – One example of community action to increase tree cover in the Parish

3.4.4 **Parkland** is perhaps a surprising habitat to be found in our Parish. This relates to the remnants of Gamlingay Park, once home to Sir George Downing (1685-1749), grandson of Sir George Downing, 1st Bt., who gave his name to Downing Street. The 18.5 ha park contains the extensive earthwork remains of an early formal garden laid out in 1712, together with a 7ha ornamental lake. The site was abandoned in 1776.

3.4.5 **Wetland** features in the Parish are relatively few. There are three **streams** draining the Parish. Perhaps the most significant is Millbrook. There are two smaller unnamed tributaries, one flowing south-east from the Cinques, the second east and then south from the Great



Water Vole at Millbrook Meadows

Water Voles have declined by 97% in the last 50+ years due to habitat loss and predation by American Mink. Herbivores, they live close to waterways, burrowing into the banks to make nesting chambers. They have up to six litters a year and undergo population cycles: the 2020-21 Covid years were a 'boom' when there were at least six burrows along Meadows.

Heath. They support aquatic invertebrates and small fish such as Three-spined Stickleback. Water Shrew and the BAP listed Water Vole have been recorded from Millbrook. **Standing water** features include the Little Heath Brick Pits, Downing Park Pond, and the Cinques Meadow pond that once held Great Crested Newt.

3.4.6 Relatively small areas of **acid grassland** remain at the Cinques Meadow and Great Heath Meadow, and neutral grassland associated with the old railway cutting.

3.4.7 The **urban** area of the Parish includes significant greenspace, both public and private, including gardens, churchyards and school grounds. The mature parkland of Charnocks and Millbridge Brook Meadows, with improved grassland gradually regaining botanical interest. Sadly, once common insect-eating summer migrants, such as House Martin (in the 1970's over 100 nests were recorded from Greenacres alone), have all but disappeared. And despite recovery efforts, Swifts are down to a few pairs. One species that appears to be doing well in the village is House Sparrow, helped by good nesting habitat and cover from prickly shrubs and access to food – insects for chick food provided by flowering plants, and seeds in winter from seeded grasses, over-winter stubbles or garden feeding.

House Sparrow

Gamlingay village supports a good population of sparrows, despite a 71% decline nationally since 1977. More could be done to sustain our House Sparrow population into the future.



Autumnal Rustic

Moths live alongside us, most of which fly at night and so exist largely unseen. In our area, the Autumnal Rustic is associated with the Greensand Ridge.

Section 4: Who Can Restore Nature in Gamlingay?

In this section, we seek to identify the key stakeholders who can help nature in Gamlingay by directly or indirectly, preventing further damage to nature rich habitats and adopting nature-friendly land management practices.

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 So, who carries the responsibility to protect and restore nature? The simple answer is that we all do to a great or lesser extent, through the many decisions and uses we make of our environment each year. Some are deliberate and considered, others may be of unforeseen consequence and an indirect by-product of another activity, ranging in a cline from benefitting nature to having adverse impacts. Their scale may range from those that have direct and significant impact made by an individual or corporation (eg; damage to a protected area), to those where the impact from any one incident is small, but the collective, and cumulative impacts are huge (eg; use of bioaccumulative organochlorine pesticides).

4.2 Analysis and Results

4.2.1 In Table 1, we have attempted make the link between the main habitats of our Parish as described in section 3, their location and those with influence on their use and condition: regulators, owners and occupiers (including residents) and users. Habitat areas have been derived from the Defra MAGIC map service, managed by Natural England, that provides geographic information about the natural environment from across government.

4.2.2 To a large extent, the product expresses the obvious – that agriculture is the largest land use in the Parish, and this is conducted by relatively small number of farming landowners and tenants. Conversely, residential Gamlingay is of far smaller area managed by many more people. It follows that the farming decisions made by those engaged in agriculture will be of greater spatial significance than that of a gardener. But as the early parts of this Audit have set out, a long history of human land use means that the quality of the land for nature across the Parish is now very unevenly distributed, and some relatively small areas are of disproportionately high value. And in this context, the role of the Wildlife Trust, given its ownership of Gamlingay Wood and management agreements with several landowners, is also very significant.

Table 1. Who Can Help Nature, Related to Habitat?					
Land Use	Sub categories	Location	Area (ha)	% of Parish	Who can help?
Arable & Pastoral (75.48%)	Farmland		955.79	74.43	Freehold farmers; non-farming landlords & tenants. Government farming schemes; BCN Wildlife Trust

	Equestrian	Great Heath, Drove Rd & Cinques	13.6	1.0e5	Owners & occupiers
Woodland (7.31%)		Gamlingay Wood; Heath Plantation; Gamlingay Cinques (part); Park Plantation; Regeneration S of Park Drove; Elizabeth Way regeneration	93.8	7.31	Owners & occupiers; BCN Wildlife Trust; Natural England
Urban (16.52%)	Residential - established	Gamlingay; Mill Hill; Dennis Green; G'gay Cinques; Station Rd; Little Heath; Great Heath; North Lane; Drove Road	161.4	12.57	1,051household s (2011 census) – freehold, shared occupation & tenants; Parish Council & contractors, Residents Association & contractors
	Residential – consented or under construction	West Rd, Soule Croft;	1.2	0.09	Housing Association; Self-builders; contractors
	Public	Schools (Primary and ex-First); Ecclesiastical (St Mary's & Baptist Chapel); Cemeteries; EcoHub bldgs	5.1	0.39	Governing bodies, contractors, volunteers
	Industrial	Station Rd; Drove Rd; Potton Rd; Little Heath Sewerage Works	19.0	1.48	Owners & contractors; Anglian Water.
	Formal Greenspace	Green End & Long Lane Allotments; EcoHub playing fields; Butts Play Area; The Pitt	13.95	1.08	Parish Council; contractors; users
	Informal Greenspace	Millbridge Brook Meadows; Chapel Field; Dog Field; Log Field; The Cinques	11.8	0.91	Parish Council & contractors, volunteers; users

Wetland (0.69%)	Open Water	Triangular Lake; Little Heath Brick Pits	8.9	0.69	Private owners; users
	Streams	Greenacres stream; Great Heath stream; Millbrook	7.18km	n/a	Riparian owners & occupiers; Beds & Ivel Internal Drainage Board
TOTAL			1284.54ha ¹	98.49	

¹. Of a total Parish area of 1304.3ha. The deficit of 18.9ha is likely to be due to unmeasured habitats such as surfaced roads.

4.3 Conclusion

4.3.1 Everyone can contribute to saving nature in some way, however large or small – directly as landowners, land managers and householders; through the daily responsibilities exercised by public bodies and regulators; the activities of businesses or charities; and, in the way we spend our spare time as individuals.



We're Gardening for Nature

Across the world, there are a variety of projects supporting and encouraging people to manage their gardens of whatever size for nature. Here are examples of two: 'Backyard Wildlife Habitat' from the US, and 'Refuges LPO' from France, started in 1912 - 'Here, we protect nature!'.

Section 5. Rebuilding Gamlingay's Nature

This part of the Audit differs from previous sections. It uses the information from the previous four sections to set out a series of propositions: forward looking options to conserve nature in our Parish, both to help nature in its own right, and the people in our community for the services that nature provides.

5.1 A Spatial Model for Nature's Recovery

5.1.1 One of the best and most influential analyses on how to recover nature in England was provided by the 'Lawson Review' of 2010, 'Making Space for Nature'. Commissioned by the last Labour Government and completed under the Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition, Sir John Lawton was asked to assess the degree to which the protected areas such as nature reserves and designated areas were safeguarding nature, and whether more needed to be done.

5.1.2 His conclusion was straightforward. Protected Areas were safeguarding nature, but the existing network of protected areas was inadequate. More needed to be done not only to protect and enhance management of existing sites, but also to recreate habitats and better connect them at a landscape scale. What needed to be done could be summarised in four words: more, bigger, better and joined. There were five key approaches we needed to implement which encompass these, that also take account of the land around the ecological network. We needed to:

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

5.1.3 In general, the first priority is to enhance the quality of remaining wildlife habitat. Increasing connectivity helps, but there needs to be high quality sites with thriving wildlife populations to connect. Local circumstances are also important. In areas with large areas of relatively unfragmented habitat, the best strategy would often be to focus on improving management and enhancing habitat diversity ('heterogeneity'). In contrast, in those areas which only have small and isolated sites, it would be better to invest in the restoration and creation of new wildlife habitat. We have adopted the Lawton principles in the development of this Audit, and are pleased to see that the LNRS has done so for their wider Strategy

5.2 And its Application to Gamlingay: Improving the Quality of Existing Habitat

5.2.1 In this Audit, we have concluded that the best areas of remaining high-quality habitat have been identified and labelled. The most important area, Gamlingay Wood, is well protected and managed, and viewed by its owner and manager, the BCN Wildlife Trust, as part of a wider landscape unit, the West Cambridgeshire Hundreds.

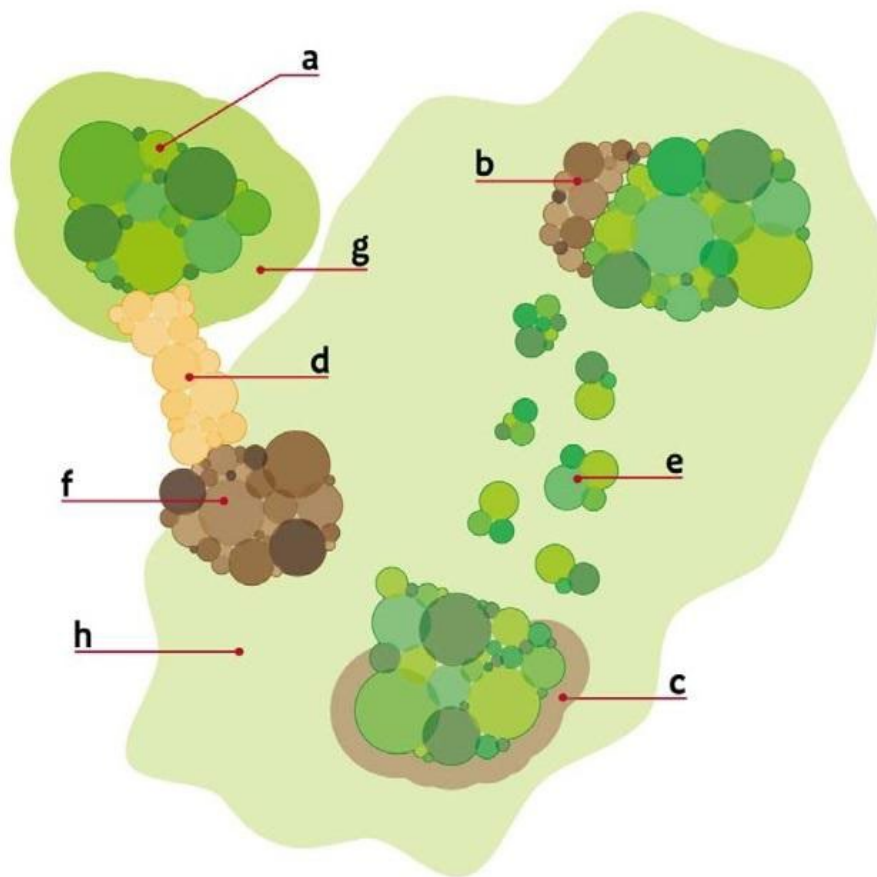


Figure 5.1 Enhancing ecological networks. Approaches include: **(a)** improving the quality of habitat patches; **(b)** making existing sites bigger, which can **(c)** include creating ecotones (transitional ‘messy’ edge habitats needed by some species); **(d)** enhancing connectivity through a continuous corridor or **(e)** a stepping stone corridor; **(f)** creating new sites; and **(g)** reducing pressures on sites either by establishing buffer zones or **(h)** enhancing the wider environment.

5.2.2 Other areas of remnant quality habitat do not qualify for SSSI notification but have been identified as County Wildlife Sites. This is probably an appropriate expression of their current value but does not necessarily ensure that they are under a sympathetic management regime. However, they do enjoy a measure of protection through the Gamlingay Neighbourhood Plan and South Cambs DC planning policies. Gamlingay’s road verges do contain some important species rich areas of grassland, but it not clear that these are under the best management either.

Action 5.1 GPC should check with BCNWT, Local Records Centre & Cambs CC as to their current assessment of condition of Parish CWS & PRV sites and, if not in good condition, whether the Parish Council can facilitate enhancement of their condition.

5.3 Application to Gamlingay - Increasing and Better Connecting the Area of Nature-rich Habitat

5.3.1 If the conclusion in 2.1 is accepted, then it follows that future effort should focus on the creation of additional habitat for nature, seeking to better connect nature-rich habitat, and ‘softening’ the matrix of land-use in which these places sit.

5.3.2 A key element of this concept is already embedded in the Gamlingay Neighbourhood Plan, policy GAM3 of which seeks to retain separation between Gamlingay village and the hamlets of Mill Hill, Dennis Green and The Cinques. It provides vital ecological connectivity between the greenspace, gardens and onetime smallholding plots of the village, and the open countryside beyond, as well as nature rich habitat in its own right.

5.3.3 The next sections seek to outline, by major habitat, what this could entail, and what the benefits for nature and people might be.

Woodland

5.3.4 The area of woodland in Gamlingay is probably the same, or even greater, extent, as it has been for the last 1,000 years. That said, at 7.3% the area under woodland cover is still low compared with the national average of 16%.

5.3.5 Gamlingay’s woodlands are relatively well protected through ownership, statutory designations and felling regulations – trees may not be felled without permission from the Forestry Commission unless subject to specific exemptions. That said, the management that sustained the health of these woodlands, such as coppicing or pannage (grazing with pigs as at New Plantation Wood until the mid-1980s) has reduced or ceased.

5.3.6 Gamlingay Wood was subject to planting with conifers and coppice management halted. Since coming into Wildlife Trust ownership, conifers have been removed, rides widened to enhance their botanical interest, and coppice management re-introduced, undertaken by volunteer work parties.

5.3.7 However, woodlands sit in a more hostile environment for nature than in the past, where there is little to buffer woodland from extremes of weather, whether heat or cold, rain or drought, wind or fire. There is a strong case to further expand Gamlingay Wood, to provide new habitat in its own right, but also to buffer and better protect the existing woodland. This could be with the intention of creating what would become more woodland or ecotones, such as scrub, that would buffer the woodland but also help species such as Turtle Dove.

5.3.8 Benefits for people include climate regulation (trees and woods have a cooling effect especially in urban areas, reducing water runoff and this downstream flooding, nutrient run-off, carbon capture and places for quiet recreation).

5.3.9 Studies have identified parts of our Parish as being suitable for woodland expansion. For example, Forestry Commission opportunities mapping for woodland creation identify substantial areas of the Parish as being of ‘low sensitivity’, that is, suitable for woodland

creation. This study appears to consider the area around Gamlingay Wood as unsuitable, perhaps because of its proximity to a statutory designated site! A national study by Terra Sulls Research CIC for Friends of the Earth identified land between the Cinques southwest to Mill Hill between the village and Park Plantation as being suitable for woodland expansion. It also highlighted the challenges of such studies, as the Downing Estate parkland site was included!

5.3.10 Tree cover is not just about rural areas of the Parish. It is now well recognised that having a good canopy of trees is important within built up areas too, contributing significant benefits for human health through shading and temperature regulation, enhancing air quality and managing water runoff (Doick et al 2017). Tree cover within the village appears to be declining as mature trees are felled due to safety concerns, to enable house extensions and new development, and, paving front gardens for car parking. They are rarely replaced.

5.3.11 Throughout the Parish, there are some specific individual trees of special character, that are of intrinsic special value or contribute to a well-loved vista. These can be protected through Tree Preservation Orders, as well as being given recognition through the Ancient Tree Register, operated by the Woodland Trust. A review of the existing listings for the Parish suggest that our special trees are under-recorded.

Actions:

- ***Protect and manage existing woodlands.***
- ***Expand woodland cover in rural parts of the Parish, especially to buffer and link existing woodlands. There may be novel ways of financing this, for example, through planting and registration of new woodland to supply Forest Carbon, and subsequent receipts from payments for carbon credits.***
- ***Protect urban trees and seek opportunities to plant more, with a view to ultimately achieving 20% canopy cover***
- ***Establish a Parish tree nursery to grow and distribute trees for planting.***
- ***A survey of individual trees in the Parish should be undertaken to produce a more complete record of the resource and to seek statutory protection for the best through Tree Preservation Order designation.***

Heathland

5.3.12 Sadly, there is no true heathland left in our Parish, save some limited areas of acidic grassland. The depth of Greensand that supported Gamlingay Great Heath was shallow and was subject to agricultural claimation and disturbance by extraction for brick clay. The usual restoration mechanisms in our area have either been through the removal of conifers and seeding where acid soils remain, or the restoration of acidic grassland and ericaceous plants on the base of sites quarried for sand as a beneficial after-use. Neither is likely to apply in our Parish, so we conclude heathland restoration or creation should not be regarded as a priority.

The small area of acidic grassland at Gamlingay Cinques remains as one of the most important fragments in the Parish, sustained by sympathetic ownership by the Parish Council and management by BCNWT.

Wetland

5.3.13 The area of wetland in Gamlingay is relatively small. The still water lake of Gamlingay Park, ex-brick pits of Little Heath and fishery at Long Lane, have been influenced by

management as fisheries for angling. There may be options to enhance their value for biodiversity.

5.3.14 Some areas of open water within the Parish have been lost but may be open to restoration. The Spittle Pit at the junction of Waresley Road and Cinques Road, was a small pond fed by a nearby spring. When full it served as an emergency water supply for the Fire Brigade. It was used to clean the wheels of carts and wagons and in winter, when frozen, it became a children's skating rink. Unfortunately, it often flooded the roads to either side as well and was eventually filled in in the late 1950s. In the absence of any other village pond, it might be possible to restore it and better regulate water levels within it.



Millbrook in spring 2019, upstream of the stepping stones, at its best with abundant aquatic vegetation, mainly water starwort

5.3.15 The flowing waters of Millbrook and the Cinques/Greenacres Brook are of considerable nature value. The 2013/4 river restoration project for Millbrook in the [Grab your reader's attention with a great quote from the document or use this space to emphasize a key point. To place this text box anywhere on the page, just drag it.]

Millbridge Brook Meadows area was very successful in enhancing the physical quality of the river, by creating a low-flow gravel-bed channel within the main channel. This deepened the water held in the channel during the summer and helped to flush sediment downstream. It attracted species such as Water Vole, Water Shrew, Three-spined Stickleback, and a range of aquatic plants, including Water Starwort.

5.3.16 The Brook, especially where it runs through Millbridge Brook Meadows, is an area that gives many people great pleasure – a focal point of their daily walk, that consciously or not, helps well-being. Sadly, since 2020, the restoration works have deteriorated and require maintenance. There are also signs of poor water quality in Millbrook, that may be linked to upstream inputs.

Actions

- ***A project should be carried out to create a costed restoration plan for the MBM section of Millbridge Brook , and to assess the benefits of extending restoration work upstream and downstream to the B1040.***
- ***A catchment survey could be undertaken to check on inflows to the Brook and identify any potential sources of contamination.***
- ***An assessment should be made of abstraction or other uses of water in Millbrook and their possible impact on water quality and quantity.***
- ***The Gamlingay Cinques springs that give rise to the Greenacres brook were once regarded as a special site for bryophytes. The source area should be surveyed to assess its current status, with a view to protection and enhancement.***

Arable Farmland

5.3.16 Arable farmland (by which we mean cropped land and temporary grass leys) makes up the vast majority of Gamlingay Parish's lands with around 72% of land cover. The culture of farming arrived in Britain some 6,000 years ago, marking the beginning of the Neolithic period (New Stone Age), expanding as the forest was gradually cleared. This allowed a range of wildlife species to adapt and thrive in association with these 'new' ecosystems – in contrast with, say New Zealand, where native wildlife remains closely associated with forest habitats, and settlers set up acclimatisation societies to introduce European species to the farmland they had created by felling the forest.

5.3.17 The farmland of Gamlingay has continued to see huge changes during the most recent two - three centuries, the medieval open field system being replaced relatively late through enclosure in the 1840-60s, with introduction rotational farming systems of crops and pasture to manage pests and sustain fertility, followed by post WWII mechanisation, intensification and specialisation of production.

5.3.18 Encouraged through a combination of capital grants and price support, the greater use of fertilisers and pesticides enabled both the intensification and specialisation of production, with eastern England focussing on arable cropping, usually with a rotation of three years cereals (winter wheat or barley) and a break crop (such as oil seed rape, field beans or brassicas). Crop yields and production increased dramatically, but the environmental impact of these dramatic changes caused widespread public concern.

5.3.19 Field sizes were enlarged to accommodate larger machinery, and field drainage systems installed (the decline in song thrush can be linked to the introduction of field drains, causing the loss of snails, worms and other protein-rich food sources (Peach et al 2004)). The removal of hedgerows to increase field size caused national concern during the 1960's to 80's, and hedgerow condition has steadily deteriorated due to lack of appropriate management, now that their function as stock-proof barriers has ceased.

5.3.20 The use of toxic bio-accumulative agrochemicals such as DDT and Dieldrin, that killed wildlife and threaten human life. The sale and use of most bioaccumulative toxic chemicals has now been prohibited, although the development and use of new classes of biocide do give rise to concerns, such as Neonicotinoids, or 'neonics' a class of insecticides that are chemically similar to nicotine and are used to control harmful insects, because of their impact on pollinators, such as bees.

5.3.21 Less apparent is the impact of greater fertiliser use. Ammonium in soils is a key nutrient to supply nitrogen for crops upon which our food security depends. The uptake efficiency of crops for nutrients including ammonium is relatively poor, ranging from 20% to 50% on average globally, so a substantial amount of the applied fertilizer is prone to losses from soils including ammonia volatilization into air. In the worst case on average 18% of the applied nitrogen fertilizer as ammonia gas into the air, with an extreme of 77% ending up in the atmosphere.

5.3.22 Emissions of ammonia pose numerous ecological and human health concerns. For example, plant species like mosses and lichens in peatbogs and forests are vulnerable to excessive ammonia being re-deposited back on land, which threatens ecological functioning in otherwise nitrogen-scarce natural ecosystems. Once in air, ammonia can also react with other atmospheric pollutants forming particulate matter, which results in serious health problems in humans.

5.3.23 Agricultural policy has responded over time, regulating to ban the most harmful chemicals, whilst removing subsidies that encouraged over-production and instead supporting agriculture through area and agri-environment payments. However, to date, the uptake of such schemes has been insufficient to offset the adverse impact on biodiversity of intensive agriculture, where the volume of biocides and fertilisers used creates crop monocultures that are so 'clean' that there are few insects or plants to support wildlife, including pollinators, butterflies and birds.

5.3.24 Nevertheless, the fields that surround our village and hamlets have the potential to provide an environment that not only produce food for humans, but also important habitats for farmland wildlife including breeding and wintering birds, mammals such as brown hare, butterflies and moths, bees and other pollinating insects.

5.3.25 A vital part restoring biodiversity in our parish relies on landowners and farmers to embrace the use of proven agri-environment schemes, including for example:

- Replanting of boundary hedges, managed in rotation or through hedge laying to improve forage, nesting and shelter for birds.
- Leaving hedges for c5 years to grow out creating thicker, taller hedges required by species such as bullfinch, and then coppicing them on rotation.
- Creation of pollen and nectar field margins, beetle banks and grassy margins for summer forage and cover is also of benefit.
- Sowing cover crops and wild bird seed mixes to supply winter food.
- Creation of unsown 'skylark' nesting plots, by switching off the seed drill for a few seconds. Before and after, the plot receives same fertiliser and herbicide treatments as the rest of the field.

5.3.36 Under the Agriculture Act 2020, a [new farm support policy](#) is being rolled out in England between 2021 to 2027 to replace previous support under the common agricultural policy. A key part of this will pay farmers for providing 'public goods' such as environmental improvements rather than paying them for farming an area of land as under the common agricultural policy. To date, the post Brexit transition suggests that the change in agricultural policy towards a public goods approach while phasing out direct payments is possible, even when trading partners are still receiving direct support. But there are substantive concerns about the sufficiency of the agriculture budget and the balance within it, given overall pressures on public expenditure. Government has also been seeking to reduce administrative costs – a challenge when

innovative new schemes are likely to require greater support for successful implementation. Since Brexit, cross-compliance was applied in more of a light touch fashion and was removed at the beginning of 2024. It appears some, and possibly many, farmers have reverting to past practice by, for example, ploughing field headlands, and the value of farm environmental management schemes has reduced, and are harder to access. More generally, in the regulatory sphere the approach has been to rely more on persuasion than the use of penalties – concerns remain at the overall level of agricultural pollution of watercourses (see, for example IEEP, 2024).

5.3.37 There are three main tiers of [Environmental Land Management schemes](#) in the new policy:

- the [Sustainable Farming Incentive \(SFI\)](#) pays farmers to adopt and maintain sustainable farming practices that can protect and enhance the natural environment alongside food production. Examples include improving soil quality or planting hedgerows. (Currently closed)
- [Countryside Stewardship](#) pays for more targeted actions relating to specific locations, features and habitats, with an extra incentive through ‘Countryside Stewardship Plus’ for land managers to join up action across local areas. (opens September 2025)
- [Landscape Recovery](#) pays for bespoke, longer-term, larger scale projects to enhance the natural environment. A competitive scheme, two rounds were concluded under the Conservative government. (Currently closed)

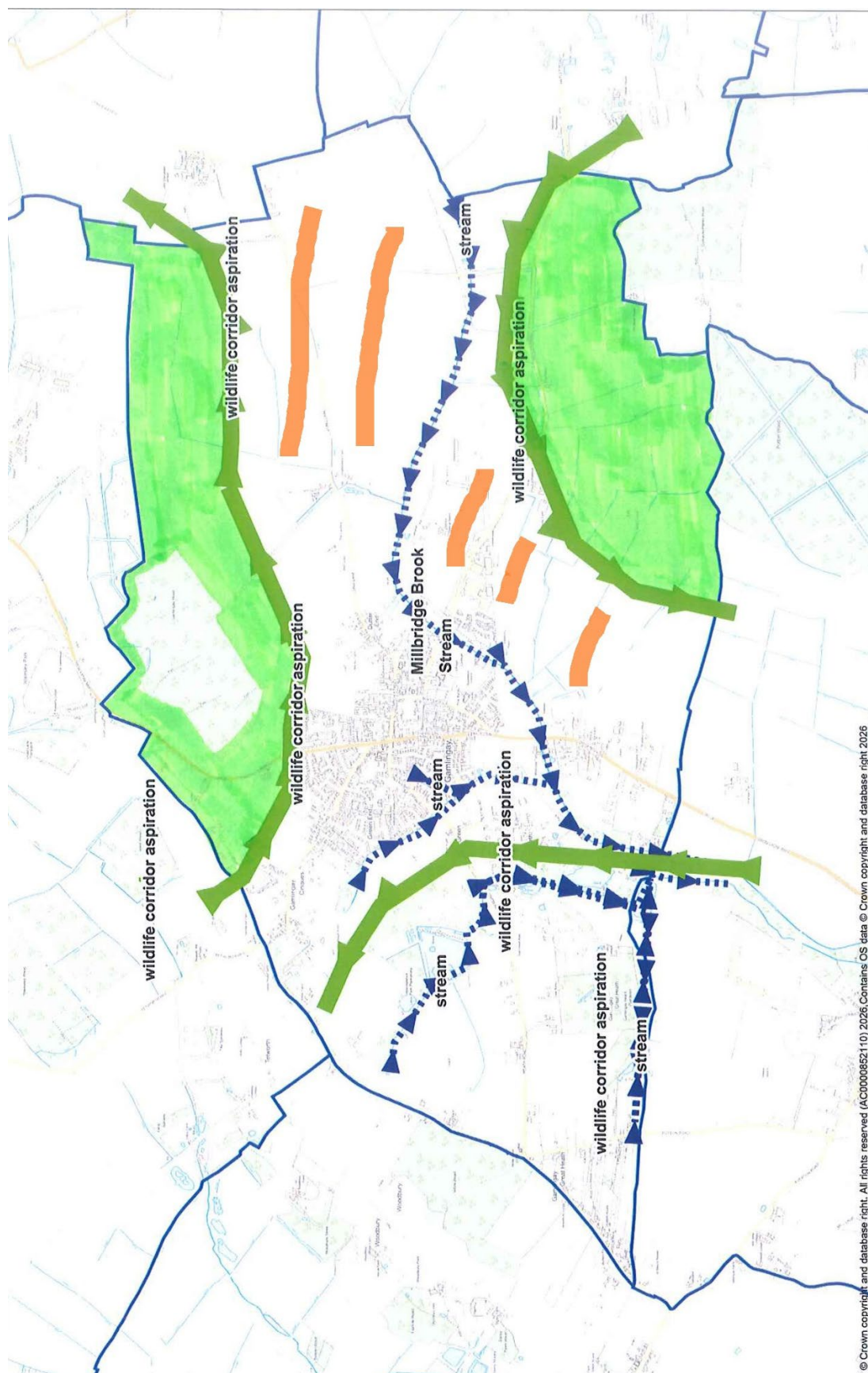
5.3.38 More farmers are exploring agroforestry schemes, such as that [RSPB Hope Farm at Elsworth](#), where fruit, cobnut and broadleaf trees are grown at 22m spacing, that allows tractor access for arable cropping between. It is hoped the agroforest will support pollinators and struggling ground-dwelling species such as grasshoppers and ladybirds, as well as improving soils and the farms carbon-budget.



Agro-forestry at National Trust Wimpole, January 2025

5.3.39 Another alternative is organic production, of which the [National Trust at Wimpole](#) is an example. Comparing the previous conventional practice to the current organic regime demonstrated that, despite the reduction in crop yields, the overall

Map 2. Enhancing Connectivity for Nature – an indicative map.



Over time, as field sizes have increased, and hedges lost, opportunities for wildlife to move through a landscape have reduced. Ideas for enhancing connectivity can include enhancing habitats along stream sides and removing any blockages to fish movement (Blue); enhancing woodland cover and adding copses in the landscape (Green), and restoring a network of substantial hedges with beetle banks and grassy margins (Orange) or adopting agro forestry .

income was about the same, due to lower fertiliser costs, higher wildlife grants and a slight price premium for organic produce. However, a significant increase in the 'public' value of natural capital was recorded. This was due to improved soil carbon storage, increased wildlife and more visitors.

5.3.40 Others are adopting complete system changes, such as Regenerative Farming which seeks to protect and improve soil - increasing soil fertility, water retention and soil biodiversity - boosting crop yields, increasing resilient harvests, lowering expensive inputs as well as creating quick environmental benefits.

5.3.41 Action for this habitat lies with a relatively small number of land managers who influence a large area of our Parish, who work within a complex system of regulation, incentive and tenure. In addition, within Gamlingay, institutional landlords have considerable influence on land management of their tenants.

5.3.42 Beyond mainstream farming support mechanisms, other opportunities are emerging for restoration of non-farmland habitats on farmland, including the supply of habitats for offsite Biodiversity Net Gain to offset the impacts of built development, and woodland creation for the supply of carbon offsets from woodland registered as Forest Carbon.

Actions

- ***Link efforts made as a consequence of this Audit with outcomes from the Natural Cambridgeshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy and any offer of support to the farming community that they may make.***
- ***Consult with local farmers, small holders and landowners to discover if they are interested in receiving support regarding increasing biodiversity on the land. This could include talks, workshops or visits for local farmers, small holders and landowners.***
- ***To offer funded training or workshops on their own farm/ land, linking with the Nature Friendly Farming Network and Regenerative Farming UK***
- ***To explore the concept of Community Supported Agriculture schemes for our area***

Urban

5.3.43 The urban area of Gamlingay remained relatively static until the 1960's, when a series of new housing estates were built. These early developments had large gardens, many of which were planted with trees. Later developments have tended to be of larger houses with smaller gardens, and often shared greenspace.

5.3.44 Urban habitats including gardens, school playgrounds and churchyards make up 13% of all land cover in the parish. Overall residential gardens are of enormous importance at 12% of the total area - the second largest habitat in Gamlingay after arable.

5.3.45 Gardens are extremely important for supporting biodiversity whether through native tree, hedge or wildflower planting all of which increase forage, shelter and nesting sites for birds, mammals and invertebrates, and helping to sustain pollinating insects.



Even nettles are valuable!

Peacock Butterflies lay their eggs on stinging nettles that provide food for their caterpillars, once they have emerged. No nettles, no beautiful butterflies!

Garden ponds provide drinking places for birds and breeding sites for amphibians and dragonflies. Houses can also support nature – for example, bats may roost under roofing tiles and in attic space.

5.3.46 As noted in 5.3.2 above, spatial planning is a crucial tool in sustaining the nature of Gamlingay. The village has been fortunate that the centre of the village holds extensive greenspace in private gardens and public open spaces (such as Charnocks), with connections to the edge of the village. As yet, Gamlingay has avoided high density estates of new housing ringing the village.

5.3.47 But not all is well. Village greenspace has steadily been eroded by extensions to older properties, and hard surfacing of front gardens for car parking. As noted in the woodland section, mature trees, perhaps planted at the time a house was first built, are also being lost as they reach maturity or are felled, due to safety concerns.

5.3.48 The night sky is also much brighter due the increase in domestic and industrial security lighting and street lighting, especially with the introduction of LED bulbs. This disrupts the life of night-flying insects, especially moths. It also causes some plants to continue growing, causing leaves to become thicker and less palatable.

5.3.49 Some of these changes matter for humans too, the more so in the face of climate change.

- Trees help to cool urban areas during the summer months by as much as between 2°C and 8°C (Doick KJ et al 2017).
- Ensuring that surfaces are permeable will allow rainfall to penetrate into the soil, rather entering the drainage system as run-off with the risk that it adds to the risk of flooding downstream – either surface water flooding, or arterial flooding as a stream or river cannot cope with the volume of water entering it. The global rise in temperatures is already associated with some of the extreme rainfall events we have seen in England in recent years.

- Disruption of the circadian clock and neuroendocrine physiology by light pollution is linked to several medical disorders in humans, including depression, insomnia, cardiovascular disease, and cancer.

5.3.50 Delivering for nature within the urban environment lies with the 1,500 households in our Parish, and several institutions (local Councils, Primary School, Churches) and businesses. In contrast to farmland, impact depends on many people taking action to achieve scale.

5.3.51 Many people feed birds and mammals, as well as gardening with nature in mind. Here are some key steps that will help, some large, some small:

- Cherish trees on your property. Look for opportunities to plant new trees of native species. If there is little space, look for a smaller species. Yes, there will be twigs and leaves to collect now and then, but this is a small price for the benefits they give us all.
- Have you room for a garden pond? If so, try and design in shallow and deeper areas and create a ramp for birds to drink from and allow mammals such as hedgehog to drink and escape if they fall in. If you have no space for a pond, then put out a bowl of water for birds to drink and bathe in – a glazed saucer used to support a planter is ideal.



Common Frog.

A pond does not have to be large to help wildlife.

- Hedges, shrubby bushes and climbing plants provide great cover for nesting birds – especially smaller leaved and sometimes prickly species such as berberis, hawthorn, cotoneaster, ivy and pyracantha. Their berries are also brilliant for birds in winter, including migrants such as fieldfare and redwing. Their flowers are great sources of nectar for bees, hoverflies and other pollinators. Avoid large leaved species such as Laurel.
- If you need to create front garden car parking, consider using a permeable surface such as gravel, rather than hard surfacing. Low plants can be grown through the gravel too. If your roof drainage feeds into the mains sewerage system, you can route it to a soakaway, or onto the surface of your garden, so creating a rain garden. Either option will receive a discount on the sewerage element of your water bill and help alleviate storm water pollution of rivers as sewerage plants overflow.
- Grow flowers that are good for pollinating insects such as bees and hoverflies.

- Think about security lights – do you need them all? If you think you do, then make them motion sensitive.
- If you have a lawn, then minimise fertiliser applications and cherish any ‘weeds’ in it. If you can, leave areas of long grass to let flowers and grasses to flower and set seed. Then mow and collect the grass in late summer after seeding. This will deplete nutrients meaning that more plant species are likely to grow in the future.
- Feed birds but keep feeders clean. Don’t use bird tables due to the risk of uneaten food becoming trapped. Move feeders around the garden, to avoid material accumulating below. Poor hygiene transmits disease. An example is *Trichomonosis* which causes lesions in the upper digestive tract, making it difficult for birds to swallow and has devastated the greenfinch population.
- Nest boxes, especially for species such as swifts, blue and great tits, and house sparrows can be helpful in providing secure nest sites, but again, ensure they are cleaned each year at the end of the season.
- Create a log pile at the end of your garden in a damp corner, for invertebrates and reptiles such as common lizards and toads.
- Check boundaries to ensure that species such as hedgehogs can pass from property to property.



Hedgehogs love gardens.

The creation of ‘Hedgehog Highways’ to ensure they can move easily and safely between gardens is an easy way of helping them.

Actions

- ***Utilise the Neighbourhood Plan to sustain and strengthen environmental connectivity through Gamlingay, through the spatial juxtaposition of greenspace and development.***
- ***Adopt a target for village Tree Canopy Cover and actively unlock opportunities to deliver it.***
- ***Create a tree nursery to supply local provenance low-cost trees and shrubs to the Parish.***

- **Create opportunities for people to gather and do great things for nature, including running training sessions in wildlife gardening, volunteer days to manage a local site, such as Millbrook Meadows or Permablitz days (where a group of people collaborate and work on changing a garden in a day perhaps adding a pond, planting a hedgerow and creating vegetable beds. Volunteers then spend time in each other's gardens working together to create a space that meets the needs of creatures big and small.**
- **Start a “I’m Looking After a Gamlingay Nature Garden” scheme, perhaps with a display plaque, and featuring gardens and management ideas in The Gazette now and then.**
- **Following the Swift Project, operate a ‘House Sparrow’ Project – a species that has declined by over 50% in the last three decades, for which Gamlingay is still a stronghold. Meeting the needs of this iconic species would deliver for a lot of other species.**
- **Seek to make public areas of greenspace more nature friendly – mainly by appropriate grassland management and planting of shrubs. Chapel Field is a good example – the planting of Berberis and establishment of thick privet hedges has attracted a thriving House Sparrow colony.**
- **Adopt a dark skies policy, switch off streetlights in the early hours and encourage households and businesses to be more selective about the number, location and shielding of security lights.**



Wild Clary

A plant of dry sunny grasslands. Locally common in south & east England and scarce elsewhere. The Chapel Field meadow has become a good local place to see and enjoy it.

Section 6. Access to Nature

If people are to care for our natural environment and the species that depend upon it, then it is vital that our community has reasonable access to experience and enjoy it in a responsible way. Access to greenspace is also a vital part of enhancing human wellbeing and general health – both only through physical activity, but the better mental health and wellbeing including reduced levels of depression, anxiety, and fatigue, and enhanced quality of life for both children and adults. And after good intentions start to flag, nature becomes the stimulus to sustain physical activity for the long term.

6.1 A rapid look at an OS map and a comparison between Gamlingay and Hatley Parishes shows how depauperate Gamlingay is in Public Rights of Way: just 8 footpaths and a single bridleway, that do not connect to make a circular walk. The Gamlingay Neighbourhood Plan recognises both this and the support that our community has expressed for expansion of an accessible network. Policies GAM7 & GAM8 in the Plan are important commitments to this aim. The Cambridgeshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan also provides important context (Cambs CC 2006 & 2016).

6.2 The Ramblers' Association (2020) estimated that there are 49,000 miles of footpaths and bridleways that have not been recorded as legal rights of way. Their [Don't Lose Your Way](#) project seeks to capture details of these Unrecorded Rights of Way with the intention of making a legal claim to their existence. It has identified six such paths within our Parish to date, although their acceptance is likely to require further documentary evidence for a claim to succeed. In 2016, Cambs CC identified 316 potential Lost Highways supported by sufficient documentary evidence to enable full investigation as to their status. There is currently no statutory deadline for completion of this process.



6.3 Distinct from this, there may be opportunities for the Parish Council to build on its efforts to enhance access through the creation of more permissive paths, following on from the connections provided to Gamlingay Wood, especially where routes follow existing farm tracks.

Actions

- ***Identify a potential network of paths that would be of community value, as a basis for consultation with land managers and users.***
- ***Identify and initiate creation of a network of permissive paths, especially along existing farm tracks, that would provide circular walks within the Parish.***
- ***Now the deadline for recording Unrecorded Public Rights of Way has been extended, explore the documentary record to establish whether such rights exist for paths within our Parish***

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Annex 1: Complete List of S41 NERC Act Priority Biodiversity Action Plan Species Recorded in Gamlingay Parish. Adapted from UKBAP species recorded in Cambridgeshire, Cambs Local Records Centre

Group	Name	Latin name	Habitat	Notes
Terrestrial mammals	Barbastelle Bat	<i>Barbastella barbastellus</i>	Ancient woodland	Wimpole and Eversden SAC designated for its breeding colony of Barbastelles
Terrestrial mammals	Brown Hare	<i>Lepus europaeus</i>	Mixed farmland	
Terrestrial mammals	Brown long-eared bat	<i>Plecotus auritus</i>		
Terrestrial mammals	Water Vole	<i>Arvicola terrestris</i>	Rivers, streams	Recorded Millbrook Meadows brook to 2020
Terrestrial mammals	West European Hedgehog	<i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>	Farmland, gardens	
Birds	Common Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	Arable farmland, hedgerows, gardens, orchards	Scarce
Birds	Common Linnet	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>	Arable farmland, gardens, orchards	Breeding and wintering
Birds	Corn Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>	Arable farmland	Breeding
Birds	European Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	Arable farmland, scrub	Summer migrant. Very scarce
Birds	Grey Partridge	<i>Perdix perdix</i>	Arable farmland	Scarce
Birds	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	Gardens, hedgerows, arable farmland,	
Birds	Lesser Redpoll	<i>Carduelis cabaret</i>	Arable farmland, hedgerows, scrub	Winter visitor
Birds	Marsh Tit	<i>Poecile palustris</i>	Mixed woodland	
Birds	Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	Arable farmland, open water, streams	
Birds	Sky Lark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	Arable farmland	Breeding & Wintering

Birds	Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	Mixed farmland, woodland, gardens	
Birds	Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	Churchyards, large gardens	Summer migrant. Now very scarce
Birds	Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>	Wet flood meadow, oil seed rape	Summer migrant
Birds	Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	Mixed farmland, hedges	
Herptiles: amphibian	Common Toad	<i>Bufo bufo</i>	Ponds	
Herptiles: amphibian	Great Crested Newt	<i>Triturus cristatus</i>	Ponds	
Herptiles: reptile	Common Lizard	<i>Zootoca vivipara</i>	Ponds, gardens	
Herptiles: reptile	Grass Snake	<i>Natrix natrix</i>	Ponds, gardens	
Terrestrial invertebrates: beetle	Necklace Ground Beetle	<i>Carabus monilis</i>		
Terrestrial invertebrates: moth	Autumnal Rustic	<i>Eugnorisma glareosa</i>		
Terrestrial invertebrates: moth	Beaded Chestnut	<i>Agrochola lychnidis</i>		Reasonably common in our area.
Terrestrial invertebrates: moth	Blood-vein	<i>Timandra comae</i>		Reasonably common in our area.
Terrestrial invertebrates: moth	Brindled Beauty	<i>Lycia hirtaria</i>		
Terrestrial invertebrates: moth	Broom Moth	<i>Melanchra pisi</i>		
Terrestrial invertebrates: moth	Brown-spot Pinion	<i>Agrochola litura</i>		
Terrestrial invertebrates: moth	Buff Ermine	<i>Spilosoma luteum</i>		Fairly common in our area.
Terrestrial invertebrates: moth	Centre-barred Sallow	<i>Atethmia centrargo</i>		

Terrestrial invertebrates: moth	Common Fan-foot	<i>Pechipogo strigilata</i>		
Terrestrial invertebrates: moth	Dark Brocade	<i>Blepharita adusta</i>		
Terrestrial invertebrates: moth	Dark Spinach	<i>Pelurga comitata</i>		
Terrestrial invertebrates: moth	Dark-barred Twin-spot Carpet	<i>Xanthorhoe ferrugata</i>		
Terrestrial invertebrates: moth	Deep-brown Dart	<i>Aporophyla lutulenta</i>		
Terrestrial invertebrates: moth	Dot Moth	<i>Melanchra persicariae</i>		Reasonably
Terrestrial invertebrates: moth	Dusky Brocade	<i>Apamea remissa</i>		
Terrestrial invertebrates: moth	Ear Moth	<i>Amphipoea oculea</i>		
Terrestrial invertebrates: moth	Garden Dart	<i>Euxoa nigricans</i>		
Terrestrial invertebrates: Moth	Ghost Moth	<i>Hepialus humuli</i>		
Terrestrial invertebrates: moth	Grey Dagger	<i>Acronicta psi</i>		Difficult to identify/verify records.
Terrestrial invertebrates: moth	Hedge Rustic	<i>Tholera cespitis</i>		
Terrestrial invertebrates: moth	Knot Grass	<i>Acronicta rumicis</i>		
Terrestrial invertebrates: moth	Large Nutmeg	<i>Apamea anceps</i>		Reasonably common in our area.
Terrestrial invertebrates: moth	Large Wainscot	<i>Rhizedra lutosa</i>		

Terrestrial invertebrates: moth	Minor Shoulder-knot	<i>Brachylomia viminalis</i>		
Terrestrial invertebrates: moth	Mottled Rustic	<i>Caradrina morpheus</i>		Reasonably common in our area.
Terrestrial invertebrates: moth	Mouse Moth	<i>Amphipyra tragopoginis</i>		Reasonably common in our area.
Terrestrial invertebrates: moth	Oak Hook-tip	<i>Watsonalla binaria</i>		
Terrestrial invertebrates: moth	Powdered Quaker	<i>Orthosia gracilis</i>		
Terrestrial invertebrates: moth	Rosy Minor	<i>Mesoligia literosa</i>		
Terrestrial invertebrates: moth	Rosy Rustic	<i>Hydraecia micacea</i>		
Terrestrial invertebrates: moth	Shaded Broad-bar	<i>Scotopteryx chenopodiata</i>		
Terrestrial invertebrates: Moth	Small Emerald	<i>Hemistola chrysoprasaria</i>		
Terrestrial invertebrates: moth	Small Phoenix	<i>Ecliptopera silaceata</i>		
Terrestrial invertebrates: Moth	Small Square-spot	<i>Diarsia rubi</i>		
Terrestrial invertebrates: moth	The Cinnabar	<i>Tyria jacobaeae</i>		
Terrestrial invertebrates: moth	The Rustic	<i>Hoplodrina blanda</i>		Difficult to identify/verify records.
Terrestrial invertebrates: moth	The Sallow	<i>Xanthia icteritia</i>		
Terrestrial invertebrates: moth	The Spinach	<i>Eulithis mellinata</i>		
Terrestrial invertebrates: moth	The Streak	<i>Chesias legatella</i>		
Terrestrial invertebrates: moth	White Ermine	<i>Spilosoma lubricipeda</i>		Reasonably common in our area.

Terrestrial invertebrates: moth	White-line Dart	<i>Euxoa tritici</i>		
Terrestrial invertebrates: moth	White-spotted Pinion	<i>Cosmia diffinis</i>	Woodland, hedges	Cambridgeshire now stronghold. Strongly associated with elm.
Non-vascular plants: bryophyte	Blunt-leaved Bristle-moss	<i>Orthotricum obtusifolium</i>		
Vascular plants	Annual Knawel	<i>Scleranthus annuus</i>		
Vascular plants	Tower Mustard	<i>Arabis glabra</i>		Last record 1996?

Annex 2: Tree Preservation Orders in Gamlingay Parish listed by South Cambridgeshire District Council. See <https://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/design-heritage-and-environment/tree-preservation-orders-and-trees-in-conservation-areas/>

Reference	Tree type	Tree No.	Status	Description
TPO 0001 (1983)	Various	A1	Confirmed	Heath Road
TPO 0001 (2005)	Various	G1	Confirmed	Cinques Rd
TPO 0001 (2005)	Various	G2	Confirmed	Cinques Rd
TPO 0001 (2005)	Various	G3	Confirmed	Cinques Rd
TPO 0001 (2005)	Various	G4	Confirmed	Cinques Rd
TPO 0001 (2005)	Various	G5	Confirmed	Cinques Rd
TPO 0002 (1991)	Oak	T1	Confirmed	West Road
TPO 0006 (2005)	Oak	T1	Confirmed	Little Heath
TPO 0001 (2005)	Ash sp.	T1	Confirmed	Cinques Rd
TPO 0001 (2005)	Sweet Chestnut	T2	Confirmed	Cinques Rd
TPO 0001 (2005)	Sweet Chestnut	T3	Confirmed	Cinques Rd
TPO 0001 (2005)	Sweet Chestnut	T4	Confirmed	Cinques Rd

TPO 0001 (2005)	Rowan	T5	Confirmed	Cinques Rd
TPO 0001 (2005)	Rowan	T6	Confirmed	Cinques Rd
TPO 0001 (2005)	Rowan	T7	Confirmed	Cinques Rd
TPO 0014 (1977)	Various	W1	Confirmed	Heath Road
TPO 0014 (1977)	Various	W2	Confirmed	Heath Road
TPO 0007 (2001)	Various	G1	Confirmed	Mill St
TPO 0002 (2000)	Various	G2	Confirmed	The Maltings
TPO 0002 (2000)	Various	G1	Confirmed	The Maltings
TPO 0008 (1998)	Various	G1	Confirmed	Charnocks Close
TPO 0005 (1961)	Various	G2	Confirmed	Station Rd
TPO 0005 (1961)	Various	G3	Confirmed	Station Rd
TPO 0007 (2001)	Walnut	T1	Confirmed	Mill St
TPO 0001 (1961)	Oak	T1	Confirmed	Heath Rd
TPO 0001 (1983)	Horse Chestnut	T2	Confirmed	Heath Rd
TPO 0001 (1983)	Beech	T4	Confirmed	Heath Rd
TPO 0001 (1983)	Ash sp.	T5	Confirmed	Heath Rd
TPO 0005 (1961)	Holly	T6	Confirmed	Station Rd
TPO 0005 (1961)	Holly	T10	Confirmed	Station Rd
TPO 0005 (1961)	Holly	T11	Confirmed	Station Rd
TPO 0019 (2002)	Oak	T1	Confirmed	Wootton Field
TPO 0007 (2001)	Cedar	T2	Confirmed	Mill St

Annex 3: Index of Umbrella and Specific Actions identified in this Audit, cross-referenced to actions detailed in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

A. General

- **GPC should check with BCNWT, Local Records Centre & Cambs CC as to their current assessment of condition of Parish CWS & PRV sites and, if not in good condition, whether the Parish Council can facilitate enhancement of their condition.** C&P LNRS Actions U1 – U1A, U1B

B. By Habitat: Increasing and Better Connecting the Area of Nature-rich Habitat

Woodland

Umbrella actions

- **Look after woodlands – protect them and manage them well.**
- **Expand woodland cover, especially to buffer and connect existing woodlands.**

Specific actions

- **Protect and manage existing woodlands.** C&P LNRS Actions Wo1 – Wo1A, Wo1B; Wo2 – Wo2A; Wo4 – Wo4A; Wo5 – Wo5A; Wo7 – Wo7A Priority Natural Landscape – West Cambridgeshire Hundreds
- **Expand woodland cover in rural parts of the Parish, especially to buffer and link existing woodlands. There may be novel ways of financing this, for example, through planting and registration of new woodland to supply Forest Carbon, and subsequent receipts from payments for carbon credits.** C&P LNRS Actions Wo3 – Wo3A; Wo6 – Wo6A, Wo9D
- **Protect urban trees and seek opportunities to plant more, with a view to ultimately achieving 20% canopy cover** C&P LNRS Actions Wo7B, Wo9C
- **Establish a Parish tree nursery to grow and distribute trees for planting.** C&P LNRS Actions Wo3A, Wo6A
- **A survey of individual trees in the Parish should be undertaken to produce a more complete record of the resource and to seek statutory protection for the best through Tree Preservation Order designation.** C&P LNRS Actions Wo9 – Wo9A, Wo9B

Heathland

Umbrella/Specific Action

- **Ensure best management of remnant acid grassland/heath at Gamlingay Cinques and other species rich grasslands.**

Wetland

Umbrella Action

- **Enhance management of water courses to create nature rich corridors through the landscape.**

Specific Actions

- **A project should be carried out to create a costed restoration plan for the MBM section of Millbridge Brook , and to assess the benefits of extending restoration work upstream and downstream to the B1040. See also C&P LNRS Actions RD1 – RD1A, RD2A, RD6A, RD6G**
- **A catchment survey could be undertaken to check on inflows to the Brook and identify any potential sources of contamination. See also C&P LNRS Action F1D**
- **An assessment should be made of abstraction or other uses of water in Millbrook and their possible impact on water quality and quantity.**
- **The Gamlingay Cinques springs that give rise to the Greenacres brook were once regarded as a special site for bryophytes. The source area should be surveyed to assess its current status, with a view to protection and enhancement. See also C&P LNRS Action RD1**

Arable Farmland

Umbrella Actions

- **Enhance the quality of arable farmland for nature.**
- **Enhance connectivity through arable farmland eg: through restoration of hedgerows.**

Specific Actions

- **Link efforts made as a consequence of this Audit with outcomes from the Natural Cambridgeshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy and any offer of support to the farming community that they may make. See also C&PLRNS Habitat Actions F1 - F1A, F1B, F1C, F1D; F2 – F2A, F2B, F2C; F4 – F4A, F4C, F4D, F4E**
- **Consult with local farmers, small holders and landowners to discover if they are interested in receiving support regarding increasing biodiversity on the land. This could include talks, workshops or visits for local farmers, small holders and landowners. See also C&PLRNS Habitat Action F1E**
- **To offer funded training or workshops on their own farm/ land, linking with the Nature Friendly Farming Network and Regenerative Farming UK**
- **To explore the concept of Community Supported Agriculture schemes for our area**

Urban

Umbrella Actions

- **Protect village green space. Enhance the residential and other built areas of the parish for nature. Plant more trees - adopt a target, perhaps aiming for 20% canopy cover.**
- **Reduce light pollution from street lighting and private external residential lighting.**
- **Create more opportunities for our community to gather and do great things for nature.**

Specific Actions

- **Utilise the Neighbourhood Plan to sustain and strengthen environmental connectivity through Gamlingay, through the spatial juxtaposition of greenspace and development.**
C&PLRNS Habitat Actions U1 - U1A, U5A, U5F
- **Adopt a target for village Tree Canopy Cover and actively unlock opportunities to deliver it.** C&PLRNS Habitat Actions U1B, U2 - U2B
- **Create a tree nursery to supply local provenance low-cost trees and shrubs to the Parish.** C&PLRNS Habitat Action U1B
- **Create opportunities for people to gather and do great things for nature, including running training sessions in wildlife gardening, volunteer days to manage a local site, such as Millbrook Meadows or Permablitz days (where a group of people collaborate and work on changing a garden in a day perhaps adding a pond, planting a hedgerow and creating vegetable beds. Volunteers then spend time in each other's gardens working together to create a space that meets the needs of creatures big and small.**
C&PLRNS Habitat Actions U1 - U1A, U5B
- **Start a “I’m Looking After a Gamlingay Nature Garden” scheme, perhaps with a display plaque, and featuring gardens and management ideas in The Gazette now and then.**
C&PLRNS Habitat Actions U5D, U5I
- **Following the Swift Project, operate a ‘House Sparrow’ Project – a species that has declined by over 50% in the last three decades, for which Gamlingay is still a stronghold. Meeting the needs of this iconic species would deliver for a lot of other species.** C&PLRNS Habitat Actions Swift 1,2,3
- **Seek to make public areas of greenspace more nature friendly – mainly by appropriate grassland management and planting of shrubs. Chapel Field is a good example – the planting of Berberis and establishment of thick privet hedges has attracted a thriving House Sparrow colony.** C&PLRNS Habitat Actions U1 -U1
- **Adopt a dark skies policy, switch off streetlights in the early hours and encourage households and businesses to be more selective about the number, location and shielding of security lights.** C&PLRNS Habitat Actions U5C, U5D, U5E, U5I

C. Access to Nature

Umbrella Action

- **Create more opportunities for people to access and enjoy nature e.g. through creation of more footpaths to provide circular routes to explore the Parish.**

Specific Actions

- **Identify a potential network of paths that would be of community value, as a basis for consultation with land managers and users. C&PLRNS Habitat Action U5B**
- **Identify and initiate creation of a network of permissive paths, especially along existing farm tracks, that would provide circular walks within the Parish. C&PLRNS Habitat Action U5B**
- **Now the deadline for recording Unrecorded Public Rights of Way has been extended, explore the documentary record to establish whether such rights exist for paths within our Parish C&PLRNS Habitat Action U5B**