

ECOLOGY AND WILDLIFE REPORT

Sherborne St John Neighbourhood Plan Review 2011-2029

**November 2023
Regulation 15/16 - Submission
Neighbourhood Plan**

Sherborne St John Neighbourhood Plan 2023

Important Wildlife and Ecology Mapping

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1. Introduction and Purpose

As part of the SSJ Neighbourhood Plan update 2023 a need was identified to upweight the evidence base and identification of the key areas of ecology and wildlife within Sherborne St John.

One of the key objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan and one of its key policies is to protect the rural character of the village. Factors strongly contributing towards the rural character of the village have been identified as visual amenity, views of countryside into and out of the village, **seeing an abundance of wildlife in the heart of the village** and low levels of light & noise pollution.

The rural character, ecology and biodiversity of the village was one of the overriding elements identified by the village community as what was important to them and what they loved about living within Sherborne St John.

Development should ensure that the rural character and natural assets of the Parish are conserved and, if possible, enhanced. There is a strong presumption that existing open space within the village must be retained where it is considered to have either an important social function (such as a meeting place, an established recreational use, or somewhere that facilitates local events), where it adds to visual amenity, or contributes to the rural character of the village.

Where development is acceptable in all other respects, it will be permitted only where it takes proper account of evidence provided by the Sherborne St John Wildlife and Ecology Mapping Project, which provides essential local knowledge and identifies the villages key wildlife hotspots, natural assets and green corridors.

This report has been produced to help to inform the selection of important local green spaces and identify which areas of the village should be protected from development so as to protect the rural character of the village.

Key elements and sources of evidence for the SSJ wildlife and ecology map

1. Volunteer research walks and ad hoc villager sightings documenting wildlife that was seen.

2. Reptiles and Amphibians records from the Hampshire and Isle Of Wight Amphibian and Reptile group (HIWARG)

3. Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre
 - a. Habitats Maps
 - b. Sites of important nature conservation (SINC's)
 - c. Notable species records

2. Volunteers Wildlife Mapping

As part of the wildlife and ecology mapping project, a group of volunteers made multiple walks on a set route that encompassed all parts of the village.

These walks were made in the early mornings and late afternoons to increase the likelihoods of spotting wildlife. The dates, times and wildlife spotted in each area were recorded and the full records are available upon request.

In addition, the village community were asked to send us any ad-hoc sightings with species, dates, times and location.

A visual representation of the results of all the sightings is shown below on page 5.

A visual map has been used to aid heat mapping of which parts of the village have the highest concentrations and variety of wildlife.

Volunteers Wildlife Mapping



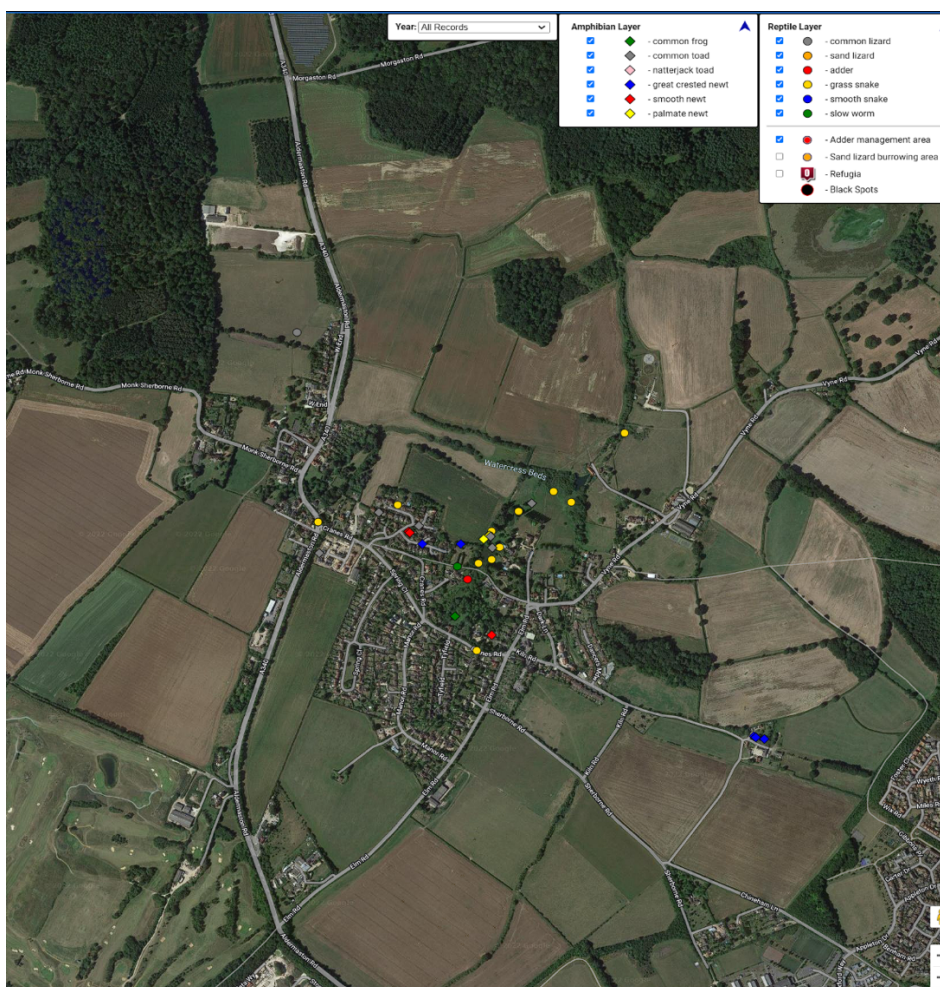
Map 1 - Note – the size of the circles denotes the number of sightings, the larger the circle the more sightings that have been made in the area.



3. HIWARG Reptiles and Amphibian Mappings

As part of this wildlife and ecology mapping project we have sourced records of reptile and amphibian species from the Hampshire and Isle Of Wight Reptile and Amphibian Group.

A detailed map of the locations and species recorded within the village is shown in the map below.



Map 2

This map reinforces the village pond and its surrounding land, tree belts, hedgerows and watercourses nearby as critical wildlife havens within the village. The most concentration of reptiles and amphibians can be found here. Most notably the European protected species Great Crested Newt have been recorded in the recent past both in the Cranesfield Pond and also

in the hedgerow that runs alongside the cemetery from Cranesfield to the village pond. Great Crested Newts have also been recorded near Kiln Farm.

4. Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC)

Habitat and species records were obtained from the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre which holds records of habitats and species sightings which they gather from a variety of sources.

The information provided by HBIC has proved invaluable in the preparation and evidence within this report and within its summary and conclusions regarding which parts of Sherborne St John are most in need of safeguarding to protect the visual amenity and rural character of the village.

The HBIC information is split into 3 broad categories

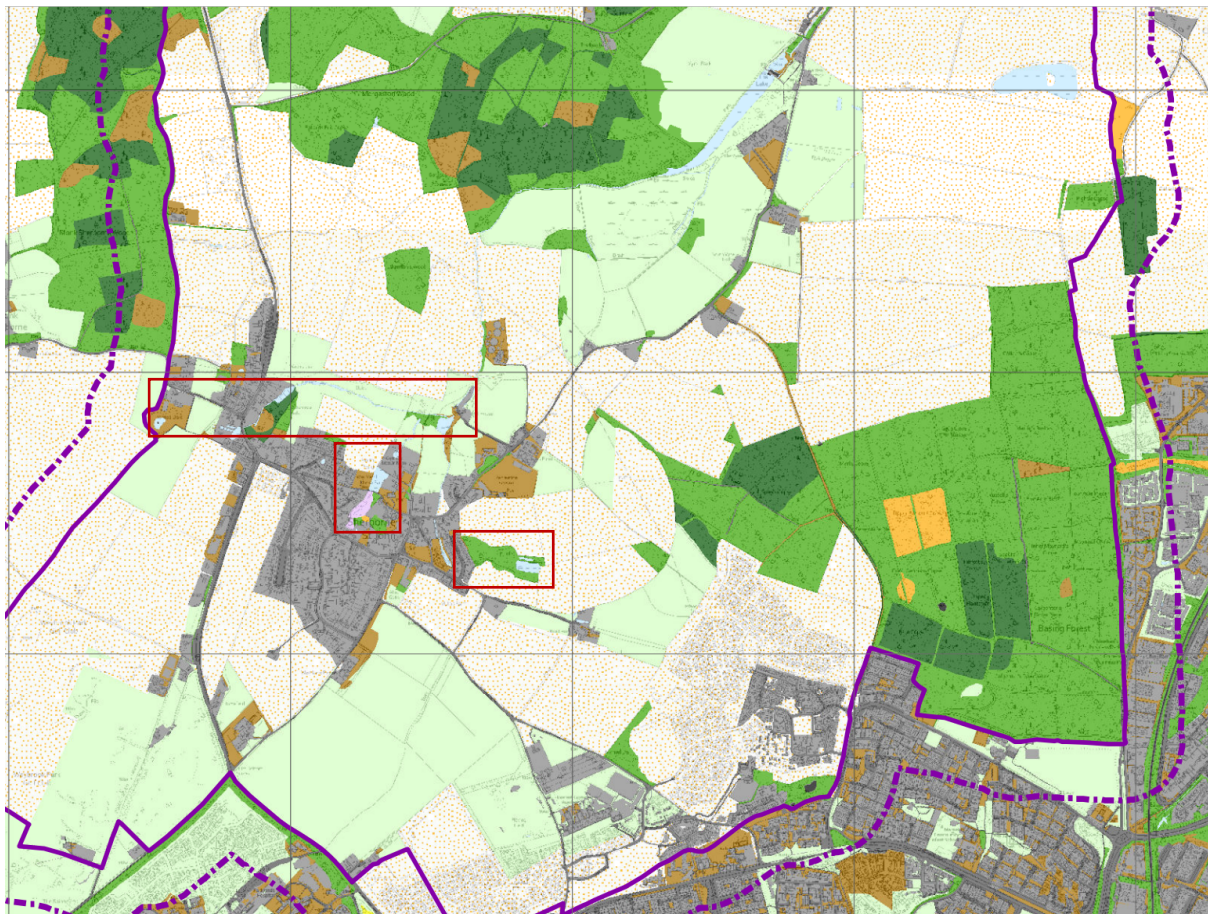
- Section 1 - Habitats mapping
- Section 2 - Sites of importance for nature conservation (SINC's)
- Section 3 - Notable species records

Section 1 Habitats Mapping

Broad Habitats (Village Centre)

The village is surrounded mostly by arable, horticultural or improved grasslands habitats. However, there are pockets of important species rich habitats that are interspersed and interlinked within the village. In particular broadleaved, mixed, yew and coniferous woodland, fen, marsh and swamps, ponds and streams (many of the streams are chalk streams and form part of the renowned Hampshire Chalk Stream Network). Predominantly these important habitats are located within the village centre and north of the village, these areas are interlinked with green corridors, meadows and streams. There is also a small woodland located east of the village centre. (each of these important areas have been marked by red boxes on the habitat map 3 on page 8). The biodiversity and purity of the renowned chalk streams should be respected and any developments in close proximity to these streams should be avoided.

Broad Habitats Map (village centre)



Broadleaved, mixed, and yew woodland	Ponds	Littoral Rock	Fen, marsh and swamp
Built-up areas and gardens	Purple Moor Grass and Rush Pastures	Littoral Sediment	Improved grassland
Calcareous grassland	Reedbeds	Neutral grassland	Inland rock
Coniferous woodland	Rivers	Rivers and streams	Inshore sublittoral rock
Arable Field Margins	Acid grassland	Unidentified habitat	
Coastal Saltmarsh	Arable and horticulture	Unidentified water	

Important species rich habitats in the centre of the village

0.2km Search Area

Parish_Boundary

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Created: 16/12/2022

Scale at A3: 1:21,000

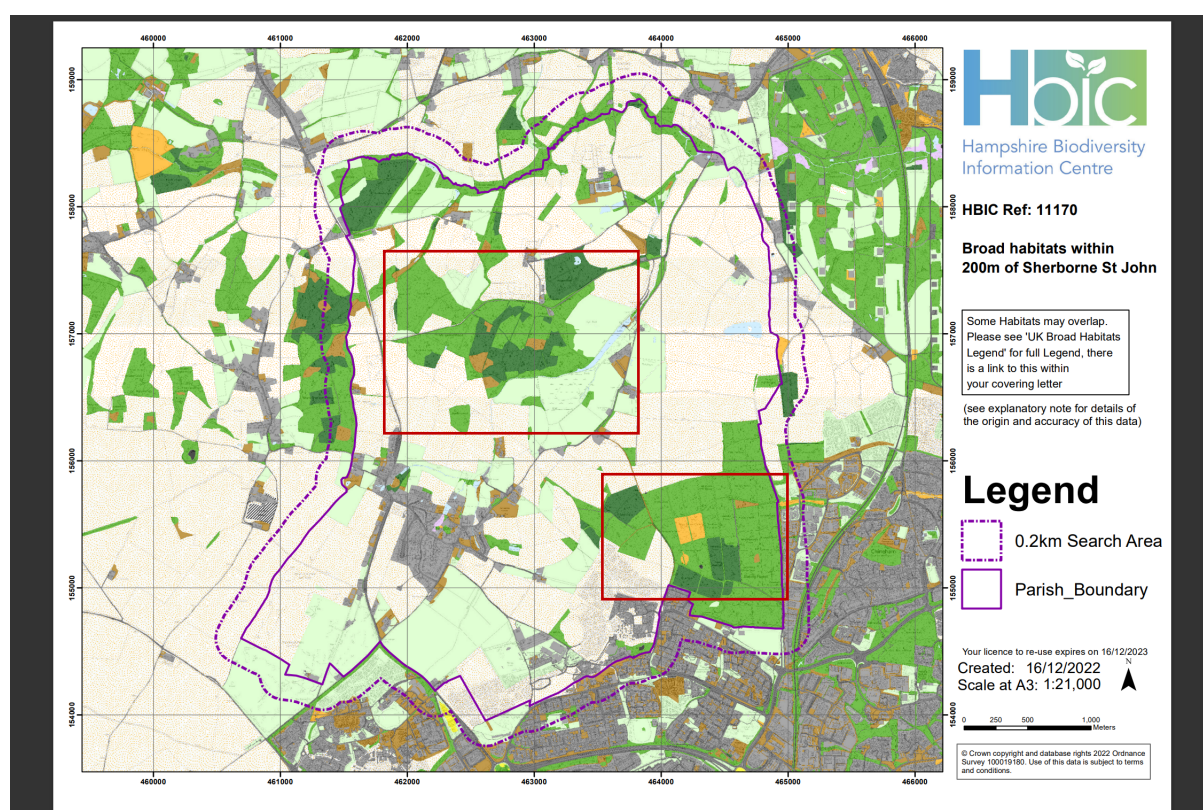


Map 3

Broad Habitats (Wider Parish)

Within the wider parish the most important habitat can be seen as mostly encompassing the areas north of the village and in particular the woodlands, ponds and streams in the vicinity of the Vyne Estate (the streams are also part of the renowned Hampshire chalk stream network). These areas being interlinked green wildlife corridors into the village centre. There is also important woodland east of the village at spiers copse and carpenters wood. (both these areas are shown by red boxes on the below map 4)

Broad Habitats Map (Wider Parish)



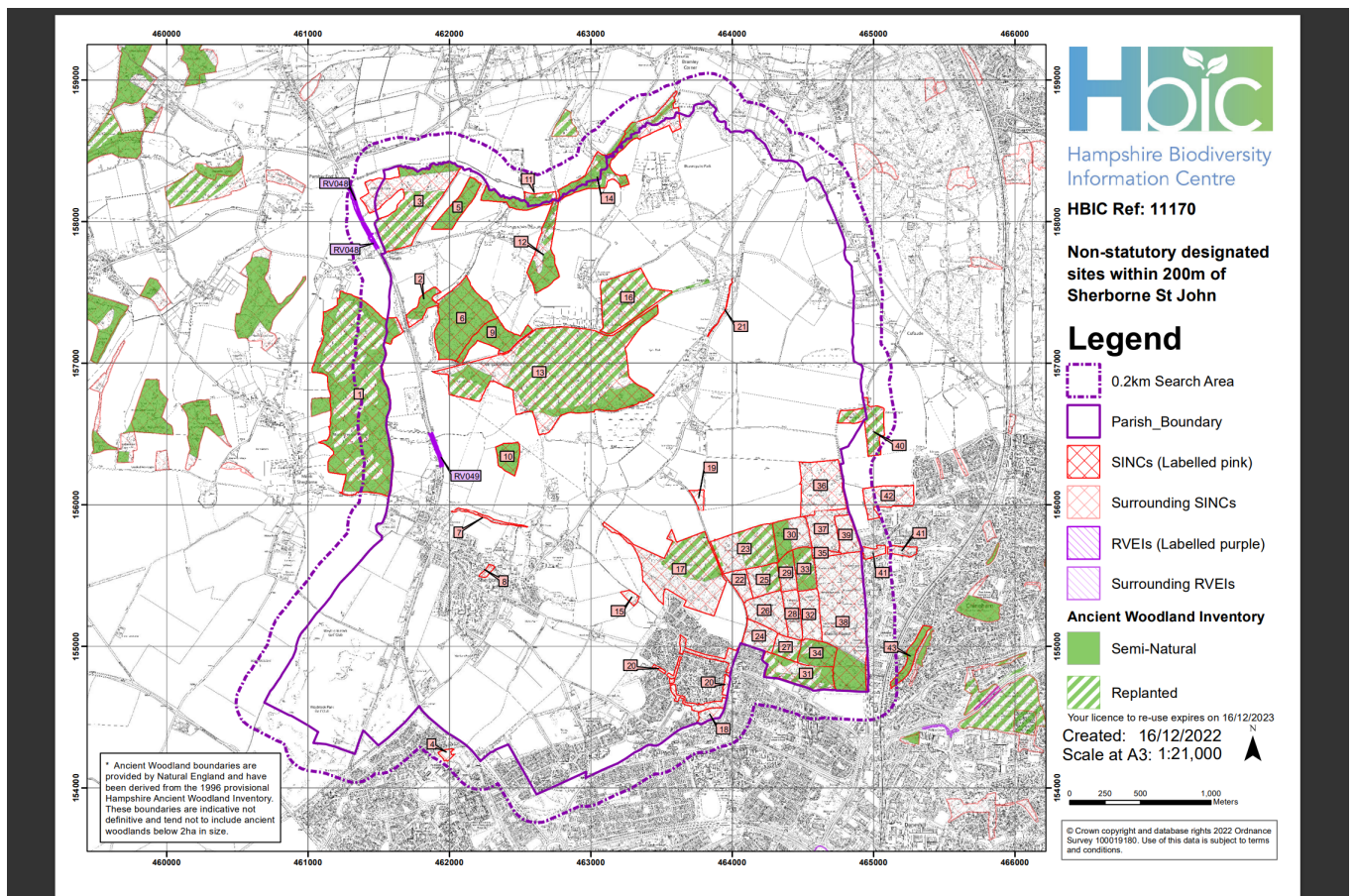
Map 4

Section 2 SINC's

Sites of Important for Nature Conservation (SINCs)

Most SINCs within the parish boundaries are located in the woodland areas of The Vyne Estate as well as the woodland areas of Spiers Copse and Carpenters Down woods. Closer to the village centre SINCs are identified in the centre of the village (Sherborne St John Meadows located just south of the village pond) and in the important ecological area north of the village centre (Weybrook and watercress beds with its important links to the village pond)

Sites of important nature conservation map (SINCs)



Map 5

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Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre

Details of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) within the search area:

Map Label	Status	SINC Ref	SINC Name	Central Grid Ref.	SINC Criteria	Species supported that meet Section 6 of SINC Selection Criteria	Area (ha)
1	SINC	BD0493	Monk Sherborne Wood	SU61505680	1A/1B		59.00
2	SINC	BD0497	Bottom Copse, Sherborne St. John	SU61805740	1A/1Cii		2.80
3	SINC	BD0498	Newlands, Holly Bush & Pamberend Gully Copses	SU61805820	1A/1B/1Cii		22.02
4	SINC	BD0811	Park Prewett School	SU61975423	6A	<i>Cephalanthera damasonium</i>	0.58
5	SINC	BD0502	Blackwater Copse	SU62005810	1A/1Cii/6A	<i>Equisetum sylvaticum</i>	4.29
6	SINC	BD0504	Cranes Copse North	SU62105740	1A/1Cii		14.76
7	SINC	BD0840	Wey Brook and Watercress Beds	SU62215592	5A/5B/6A		0.83
8	SINC	BD0506	Sherborne St John Meadows	SU62255550	5B		0.45
9	SINC	BD0508	Cranes Copse South	SU62305720	1A/1Cii		5.56
10	SINC	BD0510	Edgerton's Wood	SU62405630	1A		2.93
11	SINC	BD0513	Pamberend Moor Gully Copse	SU62505810	1A/1B/1Cii		4.25
12	SINC	BD0520	Peat Gully Copse	SU62705760	1A/1B/1Cii		7.20
13	SINC	BD0526	Morgaston Wood	SU63005700	1A/1B/6A	<i>Argynnis paphia</i> , <i>Minoc murinata</i> , <i>Meconopsis cambrica</i>	63.03
14	SINC	BD0530	Wiltshires Gully Copse	SU63205850	1A/1B/1Cii		12.11
15	SINC	BD0772	Basing Forest 14, Kiln Farm Spreads	SU63285535	1B		0.74
16	SINC	BD0533	Pepper Wood	SU63305740	1A/1B		12.61
17	SINC	BD0540	Basing Forest Spier's Copse	SU63455555	1A/1B		22.95
18	SINC	BD0545	Popley Pond	SU63805450	6A	<i>Triturus cristatus</i> , <i>Trifolium fragiferum</i> , <i>Thalictrum flavum</i> , <i>Ranunculus aquatilis</i>	1.40
19	SINC	BD0546	Basing Forest 23, John's Copse	SU63805610	1B		0.92
20	SINC	BD0823	Marnel Park Grasslands	SU63845459	6A	<i>Triturus cristatus</i>	4.93

Sharing information about Hampshire's wildlife

The Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre Partnership includes local authorities, government agencies, wildlife charities and species recording groups



Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre

Map Label	Status	SINC Ref	SINC Name	Central Grid Ref.	SINC Criteria	Species supported that meet Section 6 of SINC Selection Criteria	Area (ha)
21	SINC	BD0550	Wey Brook, The Vyne	SU63985750	6A	<i>Pisidium tenuilineatum</i>	0.11
22	SINC	BD0552	Basing Forest 9: Seven Acre Piece	SU64105540	1B/6A	<i>Triturus cristatus</i>	2.56
23	SINC	BD0553	Basing Forest 17: Marls Copse	SU64105570	1A/1B/2B		11.33
24	SINC	BD0555	Basing Forest 2: Barn Copse	SU64205510	1B/2B		3.75
25	SINC	BD0556	Basing Forest 10: Upper Parrott's Copse	SU64205550	1B		4.37
26	SINC	BD0559	Basing Forest 5: Great German's Copse & Parrott's Copse	SU64305520	1B		6.23
27	SINC	BD0565	Basing Forest 3: Carpenters Down Wood (North-West)	SU64405500	1B/2B		2.73
28	SINC	BD0566	Basing Forest 6: Upper Plantation	SU64405520	1A/1B		3.67
29	SINC	BD0567	Basing Forest 11: Five Acre Plantation	SU64405550	1A/1B		2.92
30	SINC	BD0568	Basing Forest 18: Grub Close Plantation	SU64405580	1A/1B		5.58
31	SINC	BD0571	Basing Forest 1: Carpenters Down Wood (South)	SU64505480	1A/1B		7.85
32	SINC	BD0572	Basing Forest 7: Scours Plantation	SU64505520	1B		4.87
33	SINC	BD0573	Basing Forest 12: Russell's Copse	SU64505550	1A/1B/6A	<i>Muscardinus avellanarius</i>	4.16
34	SINC	BD0577	Basing Forest 4: Carpenters Down Wood (North-East)	SU64605500	1B/2B		4.43
35	SINC	BD0578	Basing Forest 13: Block 360	SU64605560	1B		0.88
36	SINC	BD0579	Basing Forest 24: Collett's Copse	SU64655615	1B		10.67
37	SINC	BD0581	Basing Forest 19: Martin's Bushes (A)	SU64705580	1B		5.87
38	SINC	BD0586	Carpenter's Down Wood (East)	SU64775525	1A/1B/6A	<i>Argynnis paphia</i> , <i>Epipactis phyllanthus</i> , <i>Lotus tenuis</i> , <i>Muscardinus avellanarius</i>	28.15
39	SINC	BD0587	Basing Forest 20: Martin's Bushes (B)	SU64805580	1B		3.45
40	SINC	BD0591	Galleries & Gallery Pightle Copses	SU65005660	1B		5.91

Sharing information about Hampshire's wildlife

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Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre

Map Label	Status	SINC Ref	SINC Name	Central Grid Ref.	SINC Criteria	Species supported that meet Section 6 of SINC Selection Criteria	Area (ha)
41	SINC	BD0810	Chineham Business Park / Petty's Brook	SU65095568	1A/2D/5B/6A	<i>Muscardinus avellanarius</i>	2.34
42	SINC	BD0596	Long Swains Row	SU65205610	1B		5.60
43	SINC	BD0601	Long Copse, Chineham	SU65255495	1A		2.51

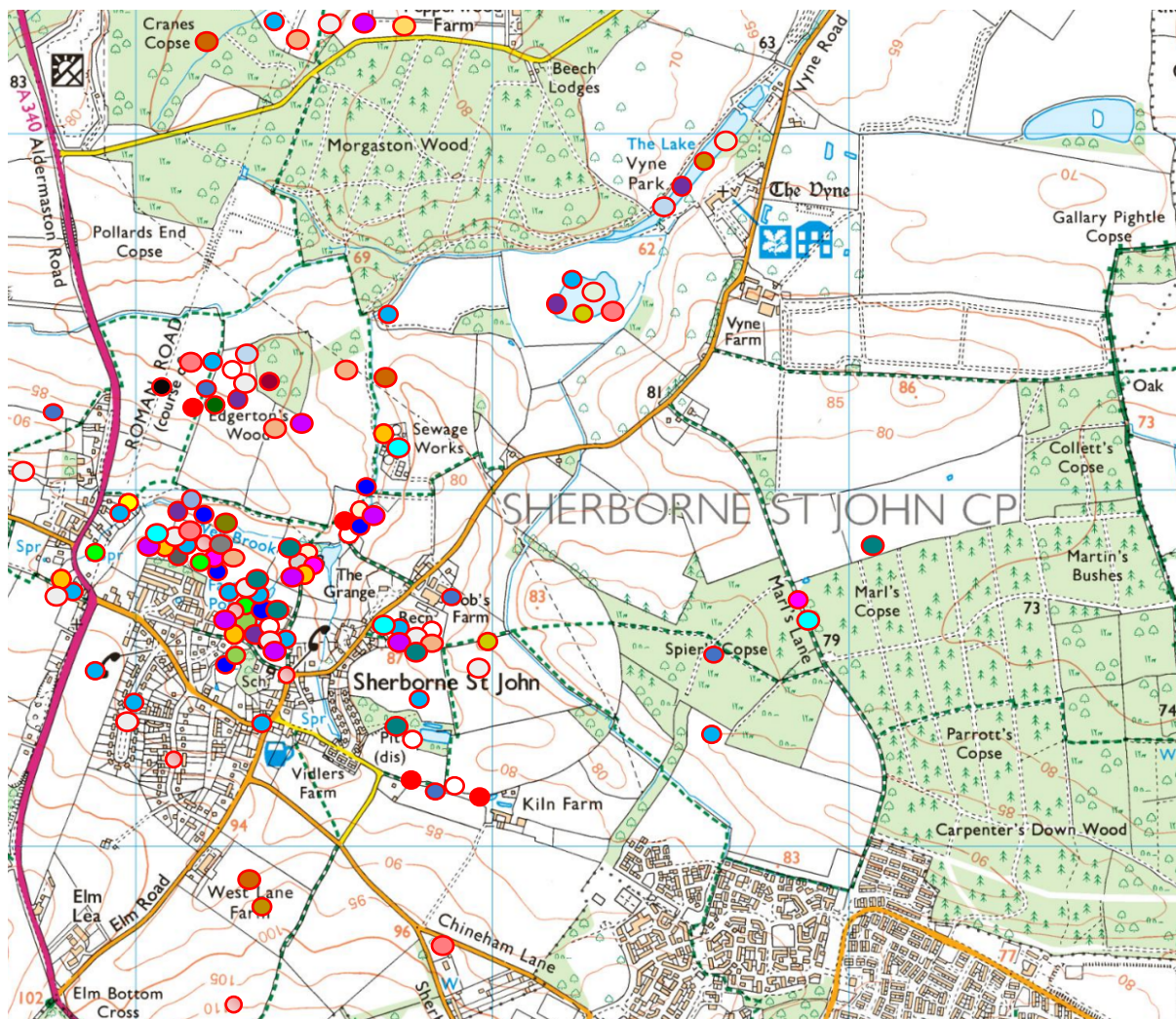
Please note SINC criteria 2D is no longer valid, however it is being retained on existing SINCs until they are re-evaluated. 2D SINCs are Grasslands which have become impoverished through inappropriate management, but which retain sufficient elements of relic unimproved grassland to enable recovery.

Section 3 HBIC Notable Species Records

HBIC Notable Species records (only records described as a location of Sherborne St John included).

The species records from HBIC have been mapped using OS grid references provided with the records onto the below map 6 to visually represent a heat map of critical areas that should be protected from development

Birds & Mammals



	Skylarks		Little Egret		Great black backed gull		Redstart
	Kingfisher		Yellowhammer		Linnet		Great crested grebe
	Grey Heron		Reed Bunting		Woodlark		Shoveler
	Ceti's Warbler		Brambling		Red Kite		Starling
	Black Headed Gull		Snipe		Grey Wagtail		Redwing
	Hawfinch		Herring Gull		Spotted Flycatcher		Song Thrush
	Cuckoo		Lesser black backed gull		House Sparrow		Fieldfare
	Mistle Thrush		Barn Owl		Lapwing		Brown Hare
							Polecat

Map 6

These records and this map support the rest of the evidence within this report.

The most important, concentrated and diverse area of ecological value in the village is in the areas around the village pond and in the fields west and north of the pond up to the Weybrook and watercress meadows.

There are further important areas of birdlife around Edgerton woods and the wetlands and watercourses near The Vyne Estate building

5. Wildlife corridors and concentrations of wildlife

Wildlife corridors are connections across the landscape that link up areas of habitat. They support natural processes that occur in a healthy environment, including the movement of species to find resources such as food and water.

It is clear from volunteer wildlife sightings mapping Map 1 (Page 5), the data records of HIWARG on Map 2 (page 6) and the HBIC species data records shown in Map 6 (on page 12) that by far the largest concentration of wildlife in the village is between the areas of the SINC at the Weybrook and watercress meadows, the village pond, the cemetery and the SINC at the Sherborne St Meadows.

(Weybrook and watercress meadows SINC see Map 5 on page 10 and Appendix 1 on page 11)

(Sherborne St John meadows SINC see Map 5 on page 10 and Appendix 1 on page 11).

The concentration of wildlife and the habitats that interconnect at these spots and the water sources of the pond clearly demonstrate and meet the above definition of what can be seen as a wildlife corridor. As such this has been indicated on the below Map 7 on page 15.

The only possible route for wildlife to enter this area is from the northerly direction of the National Trust land and the Weybrook and Watercress Meadows. Wildlife does not travel well through urbanised areas of housing, gardens and road that exist in the village south of this area.

An indicative zone of influence will exist around and adjacent to this corridor (as it does for all wildlife corridors) due to wildlife roaming and not solely using linear areas. Any urbanisation of this zone will significantly degrade the wildlife corridor by making the area less appealing for animals to roam through due to noise pollution, light pollution, man made barriers (eg garden fences) and green habitat loss.

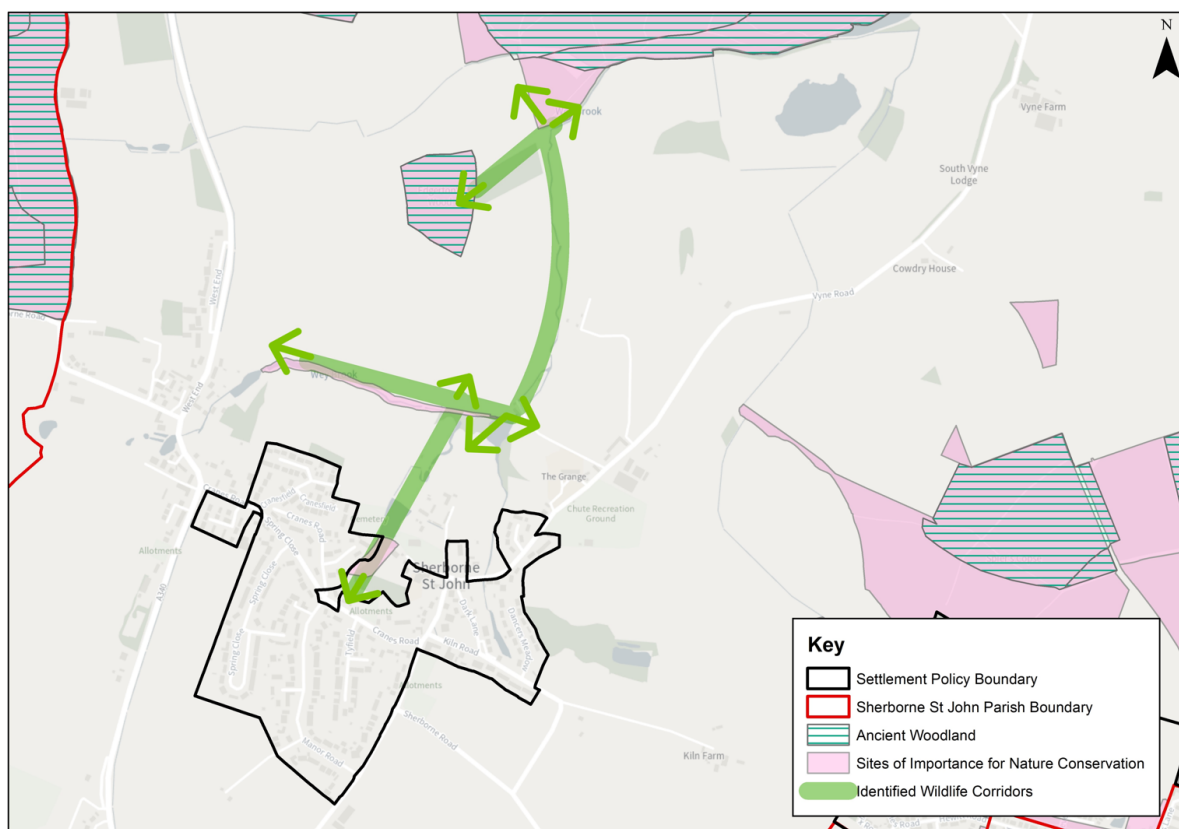
As demonstrated by Map 1, Map 2 and Map 6, the key wildlife area of the village is located near the village pond and in the corridor from The Vyne

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Estate past the Weybrook watercress meadows and into the village pond, the Cemetery and into St Andrews churchyard. Deer have been spotted in gardens of villagers who live in the centre of the village through the use of this corridor.

The village pond, the Weybrook north of Cranesfield and the arable fields between all these areas are the last habitats close to the centre of the village that have a concentration and variety of wildlife that can be seen regularly and enjoyed by all in the local community. This is an integral part of giving the village its rural feel.

Wildlife Corridor Map



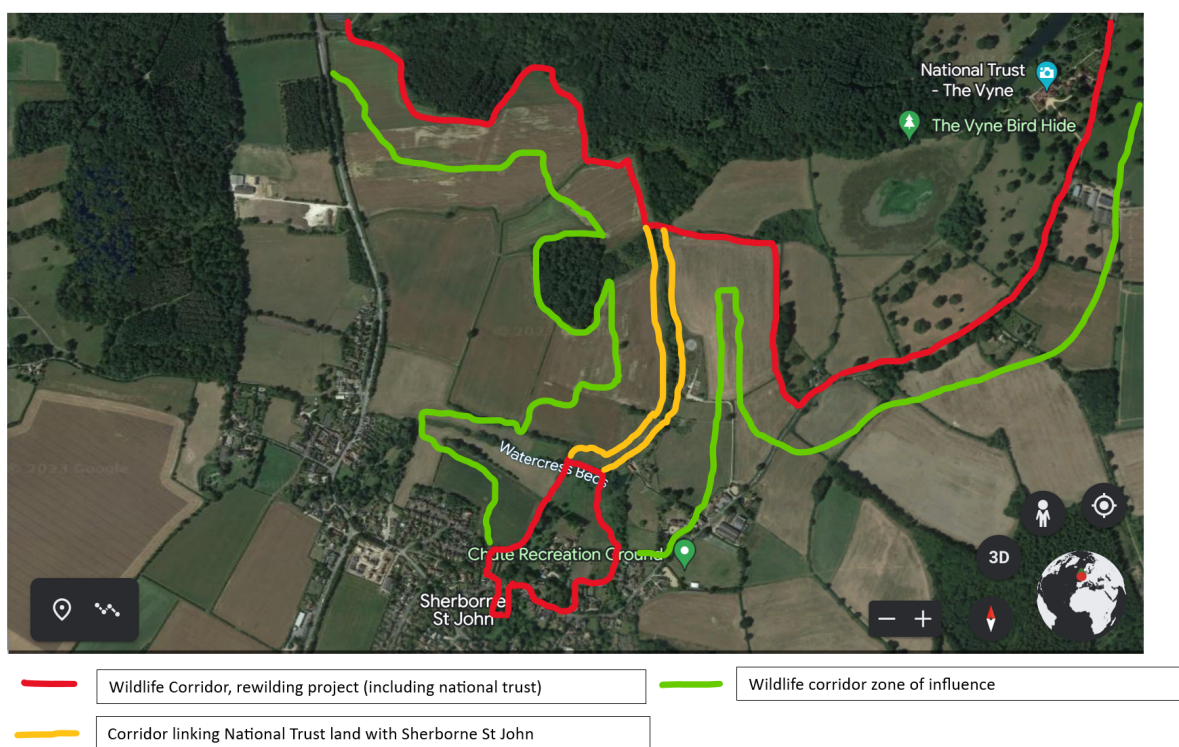
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Map 7

6. SSJ Conservation Group Rewilding Project

In the last few years, the SSJ Conservation Group (a number of local volunteers) have embarked on an ambitious rewilding project within Sherborne St John and north towards the National Trust land of the Vyne estate. This has involved creating a rewilding area and wildlife corridor that stretches from the National Trust Vyne Estate right through to the centre of the village at the land at Manor Farm, the village pond and the cemetery area.

The National Trust have been engaged in this project and are enthusiastic supporters and partners within this exciting project. This area and its zones of influence can be seen illustrated in the below wildlife corridor map. The aim of this project is to protect wildlife and its crucial habitats and enhance the biodiversity of the area surrounding the village. This is a crucial project in enhancing biodiversity and protecting the rural character of the village. The next phase of this project will be to record all species that exist within these areas to create a database of the biodiversity of this area. Any development that is agreed within the village should not be allowed to impact this project and cause any detrimental impact to the rewilding project and wildlife corridor.



Map 8

7. Overall Summary & Conclusions

There are many very important wildlife and ecological areas within the parish.

In the immediate centre of the village the most critical area evidenced by this report is the area around the village pond and the fields adjacent to it up to and including the Weybrook and stretching across to west end. This is evidenced both by the frequency and variety of wildlife sightings. This area is the key wildlife haven and corridor within the village centre and can be easily enjoyed by local villagers as well as visitors to the village.

A wildlife corridor has been identified which allows wildlife to move between national trust land, SINCs within the village, the village pond, St Andrews Churchyard and the cemetery (see Map 7 page 15). This area is critical in giving the village its distinct rural character and in allowing up close wildlife encounters within a very close vicinity of the middle of the village. The Weybrook watercress meadows and SSJ meadows in this area are also designated sites of important nature conservation.

Within the broader parish the key habitats and wildlife are located in and around The Vyne Estate and Morgaston Woods. This is demonstrated by the wildlife maps provided in this report as well as that area having multiple sites of important nature conservation.

In addition, the area of woodlands at Spiers Copse, Basing Forest and Carpenters Down Woods also has key habitat as evidenced in this report and also multiple sites of important nature conservation within this woodland.

Sources Of Reference

Various sources of independent and publicly available information have been used to provide the evidence to support this report. In addition, work from volunteers within the village in recording wildlife sightings were also used. The sources are listed below:

- Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre Reports
- Hampshire and Isle Of Wight Reptile and Amphibian Group Maps
- Volunteer wildlife recording and mapping using a standard route that covered all areas of the immediate village centre
- SSJ Conservation Group

The detailed data records (dates, times, species, location) are available upon request from the SSJ Parish Council.

The report was produced by volunteers with the local parish community and under direction and guidance from Sherborne St John Parish Council.

The group also wanted a professional opinion on the content of this report, therefore the Parish Council asked Paul Diamond, Managing Director of Ecological Surveys Ltd to review the report and provide his opinion on the robustness of its content and conclusions.

His feedback is shown below on pages 18/19 and other than some minor points **his conclusion is "I think it is a good sound document"**

Paul Diamonds detailed comments below – the adjustments were made to the report at the time of his comments in March 2023

Points -

Some pedantic, some important. I'm looking at this as if I was being asked to pick it apart

sky larks will not nest within 30m of a hedgerow - your dots look to be wrongly placed

Plural of Deer is Deer - not Deers

SNIC - Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI)

or

SINC - Sites of Important Nature Conservation (SINC)

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You have muddled the two - both are exactly the same, but used in different Counties...

Terrestrial species will generally hug fences / hedgerows as they provide cover. Your blue arrows might need a little refining

Other than the very minor points above I think it is a good sound document.

Best

Paul

Paul Diamond

Managing Director - Ecological Surveys Ltd

RHS Cert (Hort), BSc (Hons), MSc, MCIEEM, MArborA.

Associate Member of the Landscape Institute (ALI).