

Re: NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE JOINT CORE STRATEGY 2011-2031, LOCAL GREEN CORRIDOR 19a linking Fineshade Woods through Wakerley Woods over the Welland Valley and THROUGH BARROWDEN PARISH

At request of B&W NDP Group by Linda Worrall, January 2018

“The existing environment is fundamental to the appeal and way of life.” (From summary of the results of March 2016 Questionnaire for Barrowden & Wakerley Neighbourhood Development Plan.)

The 1,813 acres of Barrowden Parish rise from the southern and partly eastern edge of the River Welland which is at 40m (air survey height) above sea level. The highest parts reach 102m. From alluvial soil in the valley bottom, lower levels are over limestone, with boulder clay above 80m. Geology in Wakerley Parish is similar, but Wakerley has a great many trees particularly above the 80m contour and also has specifically designated Areas of Tranquility, Sub Regional and Local Green Infrastructure. In comparison, Barrowden, with its own hillsides, has four designated Roadside Verge Nature Reserves, two on relict limestone grassland and holding glow-worms.

This is an imbalance which needs to be addressed by designation as continuation of Local Green Corridor 19a (perhaps re-designated with a Rutland term) in Barrowden of:

- 1) Small Local Woodlands
- 2) Rutland Roadside Nature Reserve Verges, other roads, the Dismantled Railway, Rutland Round and Jurassic Way
- 3) The Welland itself and its banks
- 4) The whole village area with its wildlife populations

Such a corridor leading into the heart of Rutland would help safeguard the essentially rural nature of the two parishes in their counties and also help neighbouring Rutland parishes recognise where green links are coming from. It would highlight the Welland Valley as an area of particular scenic and cultural value for people and wildlife. Green corridors are more than physical links on the ground.

References

Maps

OS Explorer 234 Rutland Water, revised 1996

Institute of Geological Sciences Sheet 157 (Stamford)

Goldmark and Traylen (compilers) Rutland Local History Society (1985) *Maps of Rutland, Vol 9 (In Rutland Series)* Spiegl Press

37 maps of Rutland from 17th century onwards, privately owned

Record Lists of Botanical and other Species

Rutland Natural History Society Annual Reports 1965 onwards (used here from 1990-)

Stace, C (1991) *New Flora of the British Isles* Cambridge University Press

Other books etc

Aston, M and Gerrard, C (2013) *Interpreting the English Village, Landscape and Community at Shapwick, Somerset*, Oxbow Books

Cox, B (1994) *The Place-names of Rutland*, English Place-name Society

Haines, R (1907) *The Birds of Rutland*

Lott, D (1995) *Beetles: Leicestershire Red Data Books*, Leicestershire County Council Museums Arts and Records Service and Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust

1) SMALL LOCAL WOODLANDS

Barrowden parish noticeably lacks trees, and views across the Welland to wooded Wakerley are highly valued. The name “Berchedone” in Domesday Book 1086 and other variations since, can be translated from Anglo-Saxon origins as “Hill with ancient burial mounds upon it” or “Tract of upland with ancient mounds”, emphasising the significance of the higher ground. From pre-conquest until very late Enclosure by Burghley at the end of the 19th century, there was an Open Three-Field System of agriculture without hedges. Enclosure brought small fields with hawthorn hedges, and “Barrowden Heath”, used for a cow pasture on the top of the hill above the village, was dug up, causing much loss of bird habitat. There must have been some land from where people, from earliest Saxon times onward, obtained wood for domestic use, but it is not obvious.

There was, however, the large, prominent “Barougden hey” – from the Old English “haeg” meaning “an enclosure of some kind” rather than a modern “hedge”. It is shown on an early map of 1611 by Speed, and then onwards on many maps, as an enclosed area around trees, with only small changes in shape over some 250 years until the mid-19th century, when it disappeared from maps and “Barrowden Heath”, with no enclosing structure, was shown instead. The hey could have been used in many ways, for example, for haymaking, fodder, food cultivation, wooded pasture, or timber, and the boundary enclosure would keep animals or people in or out. On the site of Barrowden Hey, the 1996 OS Explorer map 234 names three small woodlands, possibly with some replanting, but it seems **highly likely that Coppice Leys, Fox Covert and Shire Oaks are relicts of Barougden Hey.**

A fourth small local woodland, **Welland Spinney**, is attached to Shire Oaks but reaches down to the Welland and the Rutland Round path. The four form a green corridor for people to see or walk to, birds, seeds and spores to fly between, and enable animals and insects to interact. Apart from flying, crossing the Welland by bridge or water is probably safer than crossing the A47, but to keep these small relict woodlands as part of a green corridor would be most appropriate from an historical, as well as an ecological viewpoint.

Coppice Leys SK 955013 mid-site, 95m contour, mixed deciduous and conifer, both sides of Wireless Hill road off A47 towards South Luffenham, to Parish Boundary. Adjoins Luffenham Heath (Golf Course) on east side.

Examples of Botany (some are “ancient woodland” indicators)

Wood-sorrel *Oxalis acetosella*
Wood Anemone *Anemone nemerosa*
Goldilocks Buttercup *Ranunculus auricomus*
Gorse *Ulex europaeus*
Common Dog-violet *Viola riviniana*
Early Dog-violet *Viola reichenbachiana*
Cuckooflower *Cardamine pratensis*
Lesser Celandine *Ranunculus ficaria*
Bugle *Ajuga reptans*

Examples of Fungi

White Saddle *Helvella crispa*
Semi-free Morel *Mitraphora semi-libera*

Green Elfcup *Chlorociboria aeruginascens*
Black Bulgar *Bulgaria inquinans*
Jelly Ear *Auricularia auricula-judae*
King Alfred's Cakes *Daldinia concentrica*
Layered Cup *Peziza varia*
White Fibrecap *Inocybe geophylla*
Deceiver *Laccaria laccata*
Velvet Shield *Pluteus umbrosus*
Butter Cap *Collybia butyracea*
Russet Toughshank *Collybia dryophila*
Sulphur Tuft *Hypholoma fasciculata*
Dryad's Saddle *Polyporus squamosus*

Notable Bird

Nightingale – 3 regularly singing during 1990s but habitat (low bushes with open glades) then lost as bushes were untrimmed.

Fox Covert SK965021 mid-site, 85m contour, sections of deciduous and conifer, on north west of green lane towards Ketton (off A47 opposite top of Live Hill). Adjoins Luffenham Heath to west. It probably was retained or developed as a fox covert for a hunt.

Examples of Flora (some are “ancient woodland “ indicators

Wood Anemone *Anemone nemorosa*
Goldilocks Buttercup *Rununculus auricomus*
Common Dog-violet *Viola riviniana*
Ground-ivy *Glechoma hederacea*

Fungi

Semi-free Morel *Mitrophora semilibera*
White Fibrecap *Inocybe Geophylla*
Deer Shield *Pluteus cervinus*
Deceiver *Laccaria laccata*
Stump Puffball *Lycoperdon pyriforme*

Notable Bird

Nightingale - 5 singing frequently in 1990s but habitat was disturbed and not current.

Shire Oaks SK 965002 mid-site, 80m contour, deciduous, both sides of A47 eastwards from crossroads of Live Hill/green lane to Ketton, to parish boundary with Tixover. The A47 was recut to the south through Shire Oaks in 20th century and old road is overgrown. Woodland flowers Primrose and Wood Anemone spread along north verge of A47 into Tixover parish.

Examples of Flora (some are “ancient woodland” indicators)

Wood Anemone *Anemone nemorosa*
Wood Forget-me-not *Myosotis sylvatica*
Primrose *Primula vulgaris*
Red Dead-nettle *Lamium purpureum*
Common Dog-violet *Viola riviniana*

Fungi

Semi-free Morel *Mitrophora semilibera*
King Alfred's Cakes *Daldinia concentrica*
Jelly Ear *Auricularia auricular-judae*

Welland Spinney SK 968006 mid-site, 55m contour, deciduous, between A47 and River Welland. Fine viewpoint into the Valley at 70m contour from adjacent layby on A47 at junction with Tixover parish. The Rutland Round runs through the Spinney on the riverbank.

Flora

Bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*
Giant Bellflower *Campanula latifolia*
Ground-ivy *Glechoma hederacea*
Common Dog-violet *Viola riviniana*

Fungi

Semi-free Morel *Mitrophora semilibera*
King Alfred's Cakes *Daldinia concentrica*

2) ROADSIDE VERGE NATURE RESERVES, OTHER ROADS, THE DISMANTLED RAILWAY, RUTLAND ROUND AND JURASSIC WAY

FOUR ROADSIDE VERGE NATURE RESERVES on Morcott Road (1), Seaton Road (2), Luffenham Road (3) and Back Road (17) (see details at end of document) were designated by Rutland County Council in 1997 and have been surveyed each year by Rutland Natural History Society members. Roadside signs are in place. All four form green corridors, enjoyed by villagers and visitors, whether or not on foot.

RNVRs need looking after. Cutting regimes are sometimes mis-timed, putting special plants and insects at risk as a result. Glow-worms, nationally scarce and recognised in the Leicestershire Red Data Books as a declining species, are a Barrowden speciality on both sides of RVNRs Luffenham Road and Back Road, but are at great risk from being scraped off by mowers.

These adult beetles use the RNVRs to glow on in summer to attract their mates, but it is known that their larvae live in the grassy headlands and less cultivatable land in the fields behind the RNVRs, and some of this has recently been ploughed and the whole colony on Back Road and Luffenham Road is threatened.

Add: Green corridor behind RVNR No 17; from Back Road north verge, running north up to A47: "Stone Close", limestone grassland with stone, some 6m metres wide, recently narrowed, and including thick old hedge on the west side of Drift Field. Vital glow-worm habitat discovered in a professional survey of 2007.

Add: Wider marking on both sides of green corridors of Verges 1 and 3 to include headlands in fields behind verge hedges.

OTHER VERGES AND ROADS in Barrowden parish need to be included in the green corridor so that the green links with other parishes are evident:

- 1) Barrowden village edge to Wakerley Bridge over the Welland, on both sides of Wakerley Road. Wildflowers relate to soils with less limestone near the river. The Rutland Round goes off this road and the Jurassic Way is close by.
- 2) Barrowden village edge to the A47 on Live Hill, both sides, and then over the crossroads into the green lane (initially with tarmac) opposite. This corridor holds limestone flora and connects to the relicts of Barrowden Hey and runs into Ketton parish.
- 3) Seaton Road already contains a short RVNR on its south verge to conserve Dwarf Elder; the whole of this road plus its continuation to the viewpoint into Northamptonshire at its junction with the green lane (with Roman connections) at the top of Red Hill above Turtle Bridge.
- 4) The green lane (with Roman connections) between Turtle Bridge and the end of Seaton Road.
- 5) The B672 continues from Seaton Road, no 3 above, and descends Red Hill to meet the Seaton parish boundary at Coach Bridge. Views across to Northamptonshire.
- 6) See 5). The former old route down Red Hill, now a barricaded track, seemingly on the boundary with Morcott parish. It appears to have been part of the old coaching road which went over Coach Bridge, but takes a shorter and steeper route from what is now the B672 near Morcott at the Morcott parish boundary. May require clarification to confirm it is in Barrowden and a visit to determine its condition. A historical relict as well as a green corridor.

THE DISMANTLED RAILWAY

So many dismantled railways in Britain have been turned into cycle tracks or nature trails, to the delight of many locals and visitors. The whole extent of the one through Wakerley and Barrowden should be designated a green corridor. Glow-worms used to live along it, lizards, birds and probably other animals currently do. Map shows route.

RUTLAND ROUND AND JURASSIC WAY

Both these long distance routes run across and through Barrowden parish, are well used and should be included as green corridors. Map shows routes.

3) THE WELLAND ITSELF AND ITS BANKS

An exemplary green corridor and it with its banks and watermeadows should be designated for the length of the parish.

It welds Wakerley and Barrowden together, its scenery is stunning, the sound of the river refreshing; it is crossed by one old stone road bridge at Wakerley, a most useful footbridge on the water meadows between Wakerley and Barrowden; Eight-arches stone bridge is particularly visible from the churchyard at Barrowden, carrying the dismantled railway and often the first structure which visitors to both villages ask about and marvel at; and the bridge joining Barrowden to Haringworth parish, on a Roman road linking local and further away mining and trading places, named after either King Canute's head Danish Lord, one of the Lords of the Manor of Barrowden, or a 13th century Ralf Turcle from Haringworth, until printers of maps rationalised the name Thurkelbregge from 1298 to Turtle Bridge in 1798.

Before Eyebrook and Rutland Water reservoirs were built, the Valley was thick with migrating birds passing from the Wash through towards the wetlands of the River Severn. Victorian Barrowden had a resident taxidermist and shooting parties ranged up and down the Valley, chasing, amongst others, razorbills and guillemots. Modern birdwatchers still enjoy the odd moorhen and mallard, buzzard and even Little Egret, a relative newcomer, and there are also now red kites back, which went missing in the mid-19th century. Otters have returned and the once prolific eels and fishes are being coaxed back with an eel and fish pass.

Willow trees are characteristic of the water meadows, and dragonflies and mayflies characterise the river downstream of Wakerley Bridge. There is a prominent loop in the Welland as it meets the Rutland Round near Welland Spinney and leaves Rutland. Appropriately it can be seen on the map as the upside down Rutland horseshoe.

Associated Green Corridor: Footpath leading from Mill Lane Barrowden to Wakerley Road on the river bank just above Wakerley Bridge. This is an excellent link from village, through fields, to river, as part of the Jurassic Way. The Rutland Round is also nearby above its exit, east off Wakerley Road.

4) THE WHOLE VILLAGE AREA

Barrowden village is a green corridor and an oasis for birds and beasts as well as villagers and visitors, including the many who walk the long distance footpaths and enjoy the hospitality of church, pub, community shop with its café and volunteer staff, and village hall.

Gardens are not large, and infill has also occurred. Open spaces, allotments, cricket pitch, recreation ground and tree nursery are seen as important for health and wellbeing. Populations of birds, with nesting swifts, swallows and house martins on suitable buildings, butterflies, bees, amphibians (including great crested newts) and mammals (including bats, badgers and hedgehogs) are shown in Annual Reports of the Rutland Natural History Society as particularly good.

Hedgehogs are declining rapidly nationally. A loose association of village hedgehog helpers ensures that where possible gardens are linked together by holes in fences to avoid road casualties and make it easier to find the worms, snails and insects they eat; they also provide water and suitable food supplements in difficult weather and look out for unwell hedgehogs and underweight hoglets which cannot hibernate at the end of autumn. Those at risk are taken to a refuge such as the Leicestershire Wildlife Hospital, and brought back later if they survive.

Careful choice of street lighting has enabled villagers to enjoy dark skies and watch the moon and stars.

Barrowden village is small and somewhat half moon-shaped. Nevertheless it forms an integral part of the other green corridors of the parish and should be designated as one itself.

ADDITIONAL DATA, ROADSIDE VERGE NATURE RESERVES

Llists are from records in 2012 Annual Report of Rutland Natural History Society.

Verge 1, Morcott Road

On relict limestone grassland, on hill to Morcott parish boundary at windmill. The uncommon Knapweed Broomrape is parasitic with Greater Knapweed.

East Verge

Agrimony
Bladder Campion
Bramble
Broad-leaved Dock
Bulbous Buttercup
Common Bird's-foot Trefoil
Common Chickweed
Common Fumitory
Common Knapweed
Common Mallow
Common Poppy
Common Restharrow
Common Toadflax
Common Vetch
Cow Parsley
Creeping Cinquefoil
Daisy
Dandelion
Field Bindweed
Field Scabious
Garlic Mustard
Goat's-beard
Greater Knapweed
Hawthorn
Hedge Bedstraw
Hedge Bindweed
Knapweed Broomrape (particularly important)
Lesser Stitchwort
Meadow Vetchling
Pink Campion
Prickly Lettuce
Rape
Red Campion
Red Clover
Red Dead-nettle
Ribwort Plantain
Silverweed
Smooth Hawk's-beard
Spear Thistle
White Campion
White Dead-nettle
Wood Avens
Yarrow

West Verge

Agrimony
Bladder Campion
Bramble
Broad-leaved Dock
Bulbous Buttercup
Cleavers
Common Nettle
Cow Parsley
Dandelion
Field Bindweed
Field-rose
Field Scabious
Garlic Mustard
Germander Speedwell
Greater Periwinkle
Goat's-beard
Ground-ivy
Hawthorn
Hedgerow Crane's-bill
Hogweed
Knapweed Broomrape (particularly important)
Meadow Buttercup
Meadow Vetchling
Ribwort Plantain
Red Campion
Silverweed
Upright Hedge-parsley
White Dead-nettle
Wood Avens
Yarrow

Verge 2, Seaton Road (south side)

On less limey soil. Dwarf Elder is most uncommon this far north; noted in Oakham Castle precincts in earlier years. A Roman dye-plant; berries not edible.

Broad-leaved Dock
Bulbous Buttercup
Cleavers
Common Nettle
Cow Parsley
Dwarf Elder (particularly important)
Field Bindweed
Hawthorn
White Dead-nettle

Verge 3, Luffenham Road (both sides)

On relict limestone grassland. This verge was specifically designated a RVNR for Glow-worms which display there in summer months, together with the limestone flora. However, glow-worm larvae also use the fields behind to feed specifically on snails and this habitat is being lost.

Agrimony

Ash
Black Medick
Blackthorn
Bladder Campion
Bramble
Broad-leaved Dock
Broad-leaved Everlasting-pea
Bulbous Buttercup
Burnet-saxifrage
Cleavers
Common Bird's-foot trefoil
Common Hemp-nettle
Common Knapweed
Common Mallow
Common Nettle
Common Ragwort
Common Toadflax
Cow Parsley
Creeping Buttercup
Creeping Thistle
Dandelion
Elder
Field-rose
Field Bindweed
Greater Knapweed
Greater Plantain
Hawthorn
Hedge Bedstraw
Hedge Bindweed
Hoary Plantain
Hogweed
Imperforate St John's-wort
Ivy
Lady's Bedstraw
Lesser Celandine
Meadow Buttercup
Meadow Vetchling
Mugwort
Oxeye Daisy
Perforate St John's-wort
Red Clover
Snowberry
Spear Thistle
Sweet Violet
Upright Hedge-Parsley
White Bryony
White Clover
White Dead-nettle
Wild Basil
Wild Privet
Yarrow

Insect

Glow-worm *Lampyris noctiluca* (at risk)

Verge 17, Back Road (both sides)

Designated for Glow-worms, not flora. As on Verge 3, they are at risk not only from mistimed cutting regimes which can kill them, but grassy headlands behind the verge hedge on the north side have been reduced. A professional survey in 2007 before some “affordable housing” was allowed on this arable field also showed many glowing adult females along a long old field boundary hedge adjoining a wide, unploughed stony strip (Stone Close), ideal habitat for adults and larvae. This strip has recently been narrowed, which greatly increases their jeopardy. A plan to increase the Barrowden population, as recommended in a professional survey, does not appear to have been made, and a proposal to designate Stone Close as a Local Wildlife Site was unable to be made as no communication with the farmer was possible.

Bulbous Buttercup

Broad-leaved Dock

Cleavers

Common Nettle

Cow Parsley

Greater Plantain

Field Bindweed

Hogweed

Pineappleweed

Scentless Mayweed

Insect

Glow-worm *Lampyris noctiluca* (at risk)