



Common Position on
**The Old Park &
Chequers Wood SSSI**

FEBRUARY 2023




We, the undersigned organisations, ask Canterbury City Council as part of the Local Plan 2045 process to ensure the effective buffering, protection, expansion and connectivity of the Old Park & Chequers Wood Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), as outlined below.

1. The importance of effectively buffering the SSSI

We call for the effective buffering of Old Park & Chequers Wood SSSI before any proposals for new housing (Policy C15 of the draft Local Plan) or development of an Eastern Movement Corridor (Policy C16) are made, in line with the buffering of other comparable SSSIs where predation by cats and disturbance from new housing developments, and the effects of habitat fragmentation and isolation caused by new roads, are key issues of concern.

2. The importance of protecting the integrity of the SSSI and its buffer zone

We call for the rejection of all forms of development within the Old Park & Chequers Wood SSSI and its buffer zone, whether primary development (such as a bypass or housing) or secondary development (such as the relocation of golf club facilities) so as to fully protect the integrity of the SSSI and its buffer zone. This is in line with paragraph 180(b) of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) concerning development on land 'within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest which is likely to have a significant effect on it (either individually or in combination with other sites)'.


3. The need to extend the boundaries of the SSSI

We call for the extension of the boundaries of the Old Park & Chequers Wood SSSI to cover the whole of Old Park and Chequers Wood, as well as the northern section of Canterbury Golf Course and the priority woodland in the north-east corner of the driving range, by reason of the habitats which these areas provide to endangered breeding birds such as nightingale and turtle dove, along with many other priority species and habitats recorded. These areas are demarcated by the orange tone on the map below. This is in line with the provisions for the enlargement of SSSIs under section 28 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).








4. The need to improve the connectivity of the SSSI & promote landscape-scale recovery

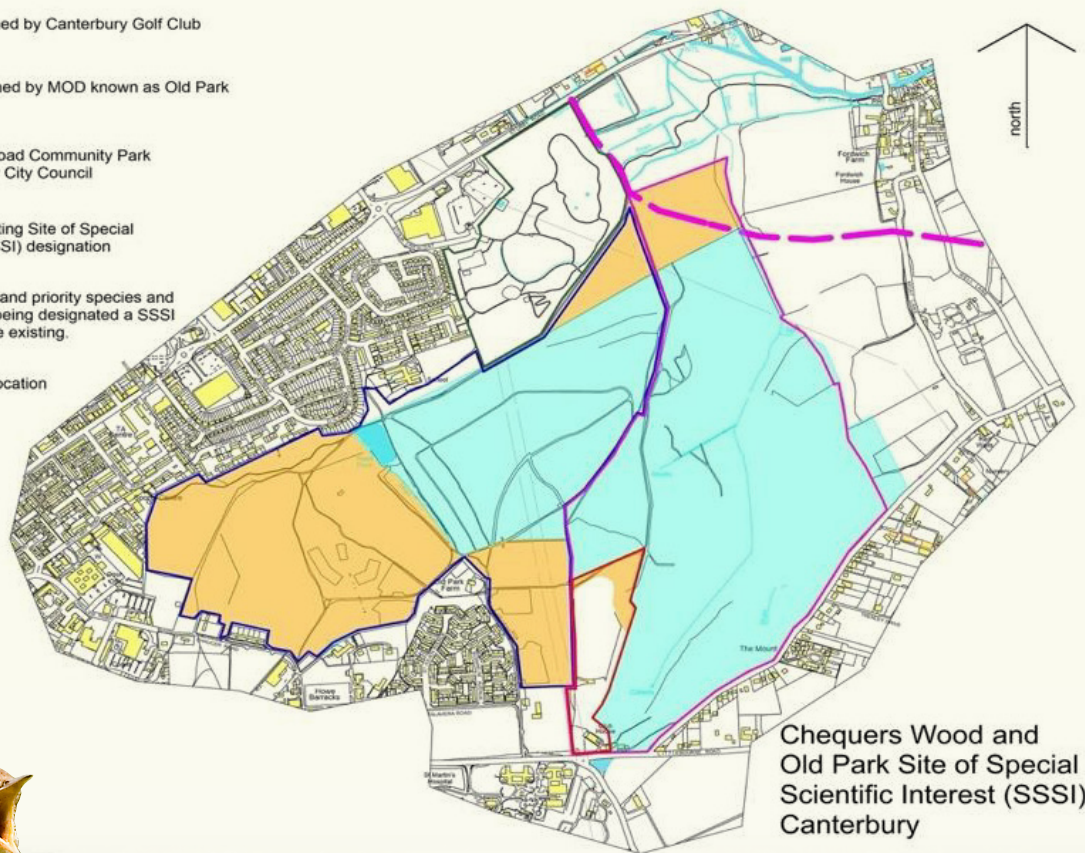
We emphasise the need to ensure the future resilience of the SSSI by protecting adjacent green spaces, such as the biodiverse Sturry Road Community Park, and by strengthening connectivity with the Stour Valley wetlands of Fordwich and Westbere through to the Stodmarsh SSSI and Ramsar site. This will facilitate landscape-scale nature recovery, in line with Chapter 2 of the government's 25 Year Environment plan on 'Recovering Nature', and the provisions of section 106 of the Environment Act 2021 on 'Local Nature Recovery Networks'.



Old Park & Chequers Wood showing ownership and proposed SSSI extension

Key

-  Boundary of land owned by Canterbury Golf Club
-  Boundary of land owned by MOD known as Old Park
-  Boundary of Sturry Road Community Park owned by Canterbury City Council
-  Area covered by existing Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) designation
-  Land supporting rare and priority species and habitat which merits being designated a SSSI as an extension to the existing.
-  Draft Local Plan Strategic Housing allocation Policy C15
-  Draft Local Plan line of Eastern Movement Corridor (Bypass) Policy C11 and C16

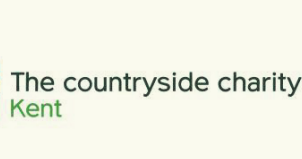


Chequers Wood and Old Park Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Canterbury



SIGNATORIES

Butterfly Conservation	Rebecca Levey, Conservation Officer
CPRE Kent	Hilary Newport, Director
Friends of Old Park & Chequers Wood	Pat Edwards, Chair
Kent Bat Group	Shirley Thompson
Kent Botanical Recording Group	Geoffrey Kitchener, Co-ordinator
Kent Ornithological Society	Andre Farrar, Chair of the Executive Committee
Kent Reptile & Amphibian Group	Mike Phillips, Recording Officer
Kent Tree and Pond Partnership	David Carey, Coordinator
Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership	Jon Shelton, Partnership Manager
Kent Wildlife Trust	Keeley Atkinson, Head of Wilder People & Places
Operation Turtle Dove	Nicole Khan, Turtle Dove Conservation Adviser, Kent
RSPB	Joseph Beale, Conservation Officer, Kent and Essex
The Wildwood Trust	Paul Whitfield, Director General
Woodland Trust	Bridget Fox, External Affairs Officer, South-East



SUPPORTING GROUPS

Alliance of Canterbury Residents' Associations (ACRA)

Barton Residents' Association

Blean, Hackington & Tyler Hill Society

Canterbury Climate Action Partnership (CCAP)

Friends of Beverley Meadow

Friends of Dane John & St Mary de Castro

Friends of Dukes and Neals Place Meadows

Friends of Fordwich and District

Friends of Kingsmead Field Village Green

Littlebourne & Stodmarsh Roads Community Association (LSRCA)

Love Hambrook Marshes

Oaten Hill & South Canterbury Association (OHSCA)

Friends of Westgate Parks

St Dunstan's Residents' Association

St Stephen's Residents' Association

The Canterbury Society

