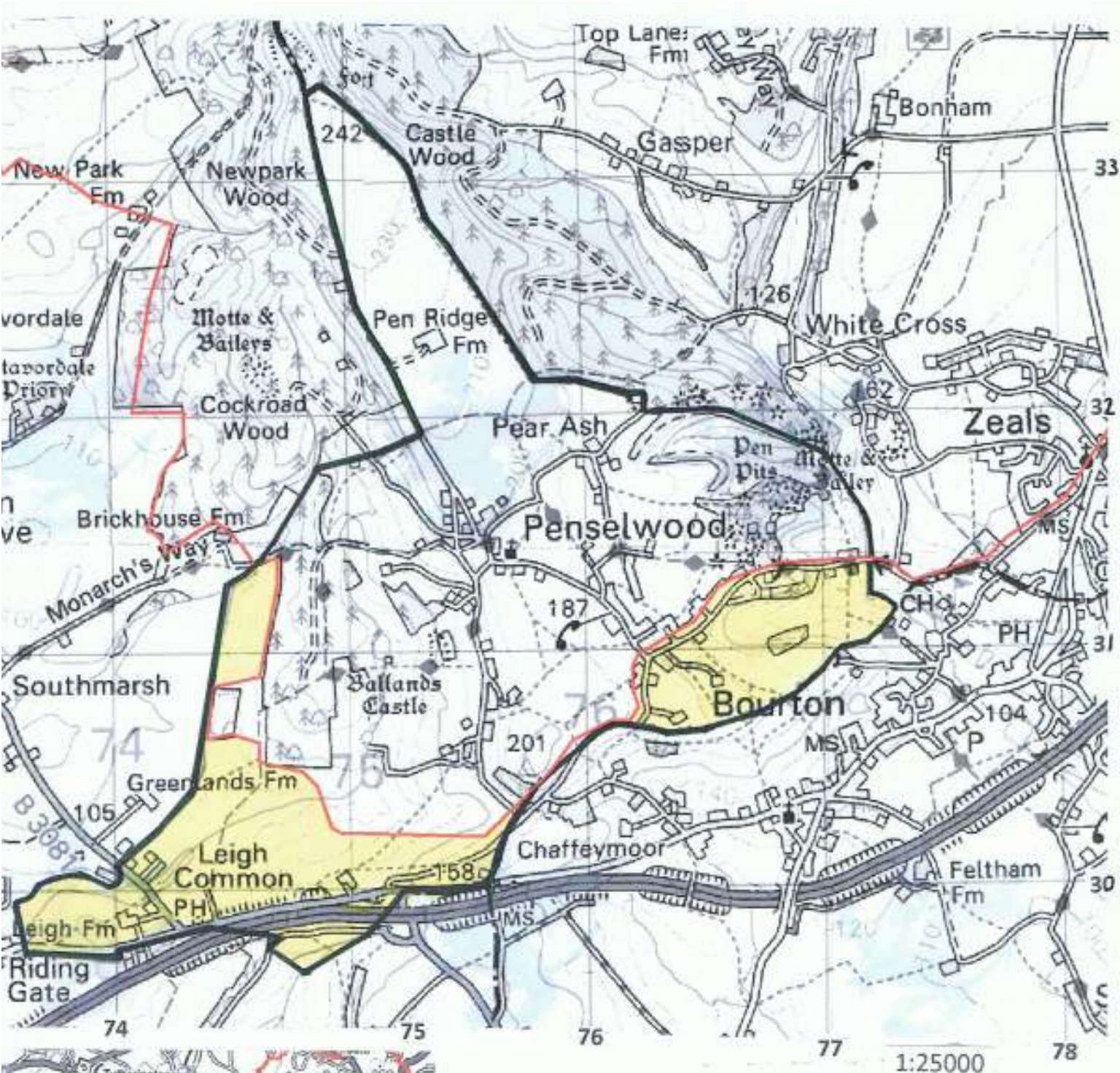


PEN SELWOOD PARISH COUNCIL

Appendix 1

**CHERISHED LANDSCAPE
EVALUATION**

October 2011



Pen Selwood

Pen Selwood Parish in relation to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

AONB Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Wiltshire Downs

- The red line delimits the area of the AONB.
- The Green Line delimits the Parish Boundary.
- The Yellow area indicates the area outside of the AONB but inside the Parish Boundary. These areas may be more at risk of 'sustainable development' including Affordable Housing.

Please note that on the 14/09/2011 the Coalition Government has yet to define the term sustainable development.

THE PARISH OF PEN SELWOOD

The Parish of PEN SELWOOD occupies the southern end of a prominent wooded ridge which formed the core of the ancient forest of Selwood boundary between Somerset and Wiltshire.

The ridge of Upper Greensand on which most of the parish lies reaches 210 m. on the northern boundary and 201 m. near the southern. To the east the land falls in Coombes to the silty clay valley of the river Stour, which forms the boundary with Wiltshire. To the west it falls to 110 m. down a wooded scarp of clay and landslip and continues south-west over Coral Rag and Oxford Clay to include Leigh Common. Much of the Parish lies within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Wiltshire Downs.

The AONB

Cranborne Chase and the West Wiltshire Downs is a landscape of national significance as recognised by its designation as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. (AONB). As such it is recognised to be of equivalent importance in terms of landscape quality as a National Park. Its designation as an AONB was confirmed in October 1983.

The First Priority of the Parish Council and residents is to:

“ To preserve the tranquil, rural character of Pen Selwood as part of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty”

Having reviewed the boundaries of the AONB (marked in red on the map appearing at the end of this Appendix) and the Parish Boundary (marked in black) we see that the AONB boundary approximating to the lanes Long Lane and Coombe Street recognises landscape quality to the North and West but does not afford the same recognition to the land on the South Eastern side of the village.

To be specific, the area of land is encompassed by the narrow lanes of Long Lane from GR763306 to the junction of Bleak Street and Coombe Street at GR 764309 and Coombe Street GR764309 to GR773314. To the North and West the Coombe is fenced by Victorian Railings.

Recognising the significance of the Coombe to the village it is the aspiration of the Parish Council that in time the present boundary vegetation will be reduced in height and the railings restored. Indeed, funding from the AONB has been provided to further this task and the tenant farmer has already made some progress in this respect. The area of land in question has been shaded yellow on the base map (see end of Appendix), whilst the Southern boundary shown in black is the Parish Boundary and this follows the original Packhorse trail. This is an important wooded lane recognised in the neighbouring village of Bourton's Village Plan.

It has been designated a Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI). We believe this area should be protected from any development that would have an adverse impact on its nature conservation value.

Photograph of the ancient Packhorse route



The area bounded by the road and the Packhorse route is approximately 200 square acres.

The land we cherish comprises a Coombe and fields which provides rough grazing and pasture. It does not include the properties that run down the side of Coombe Street to the north west. The land is dissected by a number of Footpaths namely WN 21/2, WN 21/15, WN21/4 and WN21/6. The Coombe supports deciduous woodland on the valley sides which provide wildlife habits and hunting grounds for buzzards, kestrels and sparrow hawks. Deer, badger, adder, rabbits and owls populate the Coombe. The ancient field boundaries show evidence of the millstone pits of the of the 13th and 14th centuries. In Spring both the field boundaries and woodland supports native English bluebells. The detailed and intricate landscape at close quarter opens to an expansive panoramic view reaching beyond Zeals, White Sheet Hill and the West Wiltshire Downs.

To apply and quantify objective and subjective methods of landscape assessment in a timely and cost effective way is beyond the financial capabilities of the Parish Council. Nonetheless we believe that it is possible to illustrate the quality of the landscape by using an area of land within the AONB as a comparator. We refer to the “sister” Coombe which can be found at GR765317.

Coombe Bottom

Photograph looking down Coombe Bottom in a ENE direction.



Photograph looking up Coombe Bottom in a WNW direction



Both Coombes run West to East, they are comparable in size, offer rough grazing and pasture, are dissected by popular footpaths and are part wooded. However, Coombe Bottom the “sister” Coombe, does not demonstrate the intricacy of landscape nor does it open to panoramic and expansive views beyond.

The Coombe adjacent to Coombe Street

Photograph looking up the Coombe in s SE direction



Photograph looking down the Coombe in an Easterly direction



Photograph looking down the

Coombe in a NNE direction in Autumn

The photographs illustrate the points made above and we believe that the evidence speaks for itself. In terms of the quality of the landscape, its environment and its incontrovertible value to

the community, we believe that the Coombe which is excluded from the AONB is equal to Coombe Bottom which is within the AONB.

The Parish Council considers that the area described is a cherished part of our landscape. For Planning and Conservation purposes we request that SSDC applies the same AONB safeguards to the area of land that is described, illustrated on the accompanying map in yellow.