

# Neighbourhood Planning in the High Weald AONB



Benenden lies within the High Weald AONB – an outstandingly beautiful medieval landscape

Protected by law for future generations



# The AONB Management Plan



- AONBs are preserved for the characteristic beauty of their landscape (termed 'Natural beauty' in law)
- **All public bodies, including Parish Councils, are required by law to have regard for conserving the natural beauty of AONBs (Section 85, CROW Act 2000)**
- The AONB Management Plan sets out the character of the AONB and the objectives for conserving it
- The Plan provides criteria for assessing whether the policies and actions of public bodies meet their legal duty



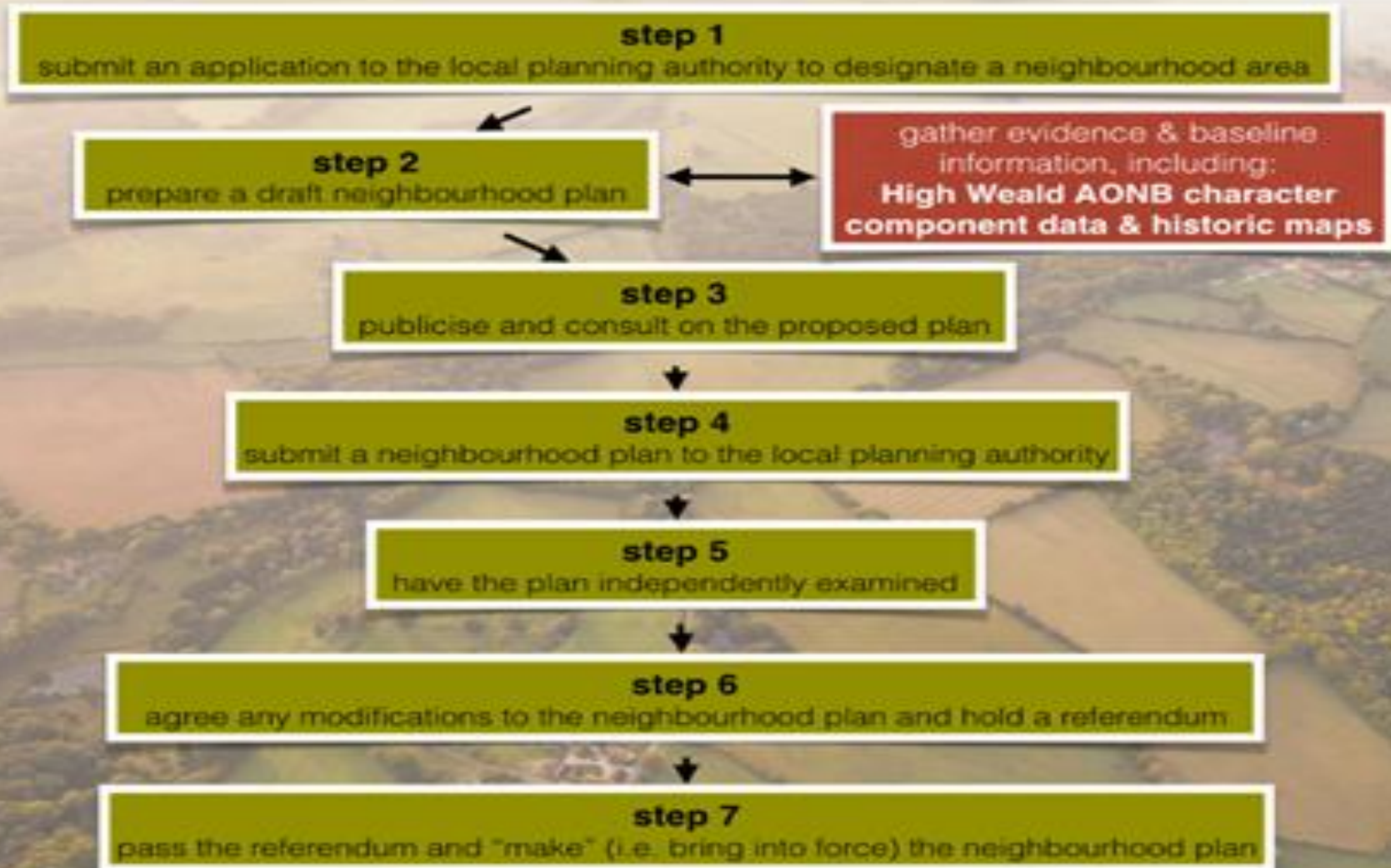
# An outstandingly beautiful landscape with characteristic features:



- **Geology**, landform, water systems and climate (sandrock outcrops, Gill streams)
- **Settlement** (Dispersed settlement pattern, Historic farmsteads)
- **Routeways** (droveways, sunken lanes)
- **Woodland** (ancient woodland, archaeological remains)
- **Field and heath** (Unimproved grassland, heathland, historic field boundaries)

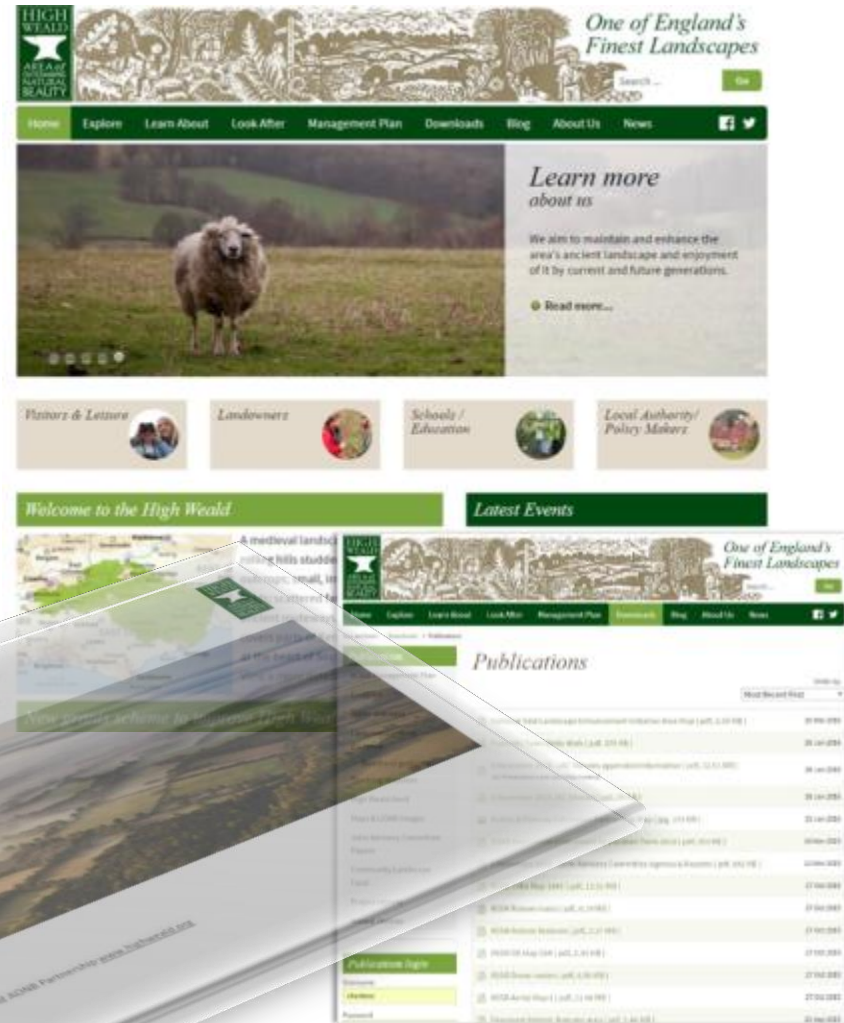


# Neighbourhood Plan Process



# How can we help?

- Information, maps and data about High Weald character components
- Advice on individual sites
- Advice on policy wording to protect the AONB
- [www.highweald.org](http://www.highweald.org)








# Geology & Water

High Weald AONB  
Landscape Character:  
**Geology, landform, water  
systems & climate**

## Benenden Parish

### Key

-  Water - ponds, reservoirs etc. (G1)
-  Watercourses (G1)
-  Sandstone outcrops (G2)
-  Area of parish outside the High Weald AONB for which data is not displayed or not available (NB: only applicable where parishes straddle the AONB boundary)
-  High Weald AONB boundary

### Summary Character Description:

The High Weald AONB is characterised by a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone. The ridges tend east-west, and from them spring numerous gill streams that form the headwaters of rivers. Wide river valleys dominate the eastern part of the AONB. The landform and water systems are subject to, and influence, a local variant of the British sub-oceanic climate.

### Management Plan Objectives

**G1 Objective:** To restore the natural function of river catchments.

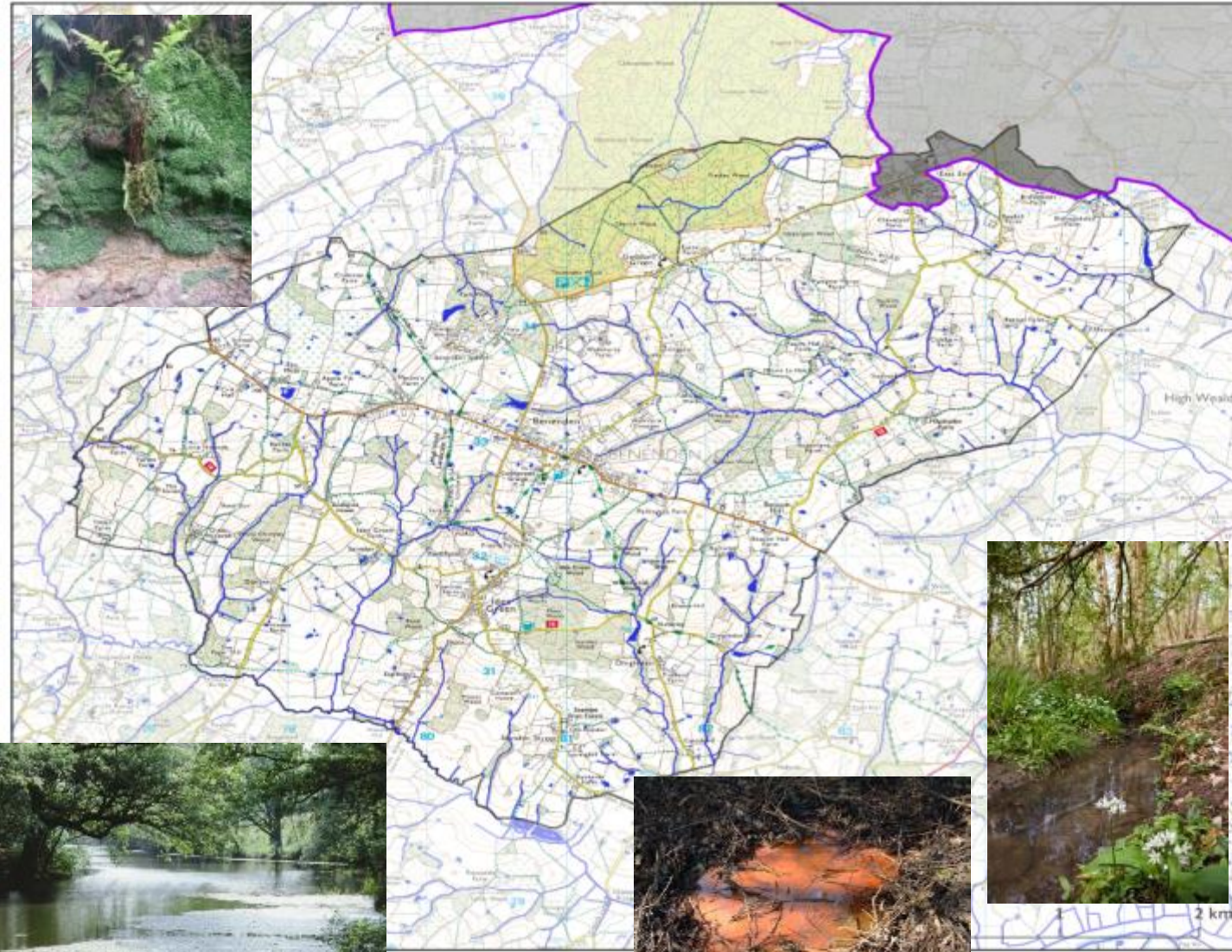
**G2 Objective:** To protect the sandstone outcrops and other important geological features of the AONB.

**G3 Objective:** Climatic conditions and rates of change which support continued conservation and enhancement of the High Weald's value landscape and habitats.

For further info please refer to the High Weald AONB Management Plan, which may be downloaded from our website (see address below).

Researched and produced by the  
High Weald AONB Unit





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# Historic Routeways

## High Weald AONB Landscape Character: Historic routeways Benenden Parish

### Key

-  Historic routeways - roads (R1)
-  Historic routeways - PROW (R1)
-  Area of parish outside the High Weald AONB for which data is not displayed or not available (NB: only applicable where parishes straddle the AONB boundary)
-  High Weald AONB boundary

### Summary Character Description:

The High Weald AONB is characterised by ancient routeways (now roads, tracks and paths) in the form of ridge-top roads and a dense system of radiating droveways. Ancient routeways are often narrow, deeply sunken, and edged with trees, hedges, wildflower-rich verges and boundary banks.

### Management Plan Objectives

*R1 Objective: To maintain the historic pattern and features of routeways.*

*R2 Objective: To enhance the ecological function of routeways.*

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# Historic Settlement



## High Weald AONB Landscape Character: Historic settlement **Benenden Parish**

### Key

- Historic farmsteads (S2)
- Historic settlement extent c.1860 (S2)  
(NB: This data is not available for every parish)
- Area of parish outside the High Weald AONB for which data is not displayed or not available  
(NB: only applicable where parishes straddle the AONB boundary)
- High Weald AONB boundary

### Summary Character Description:

The High Weald AONB is characterised by dispersed historic settlements of farmsteads and hamlets, and late medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries.

### Management Plan Objectives

**S1 Objective:** To reconnect settlements, residents and their supporting economic activity with the surrounding countryside.

**S2 Objective:** To protect the historic pattern of settlement.

**S3 Objective:** To enhance the architectural quality of the High Weald.

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# Ancient Woodland



## High Weald AONB Landscape Character: Ancient woodland Benenden Parish

### Key

-  Ancient woodland (W1)
-  Area of parish outside the High Weald AONB for which data is not displayed or not available (NB: only applicable where parishes straddle the AONB boundary)
-  High Weald AONB boundary

### Summary Character Description:

The High Weald AONB is characterised by the great extent of ancient woodland, gills, and shaws in small holdings, the value of which is inextricably linked to long-term management.

### Management Plan Objectives

*W1 Objective: To maintain existing extent of woodland and particularly ancient woodland.*

*W2 Objective: To enhance the ecological functioning of woodland at a landscape scale.*

*W3 Objective: To protect the archaeology and historic assets of AONB woodlands.*

*W4 Objective: To increase the output of sustainably produced high-quality timber and underwood for local markets.*



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# Field and Heath

## High Weald AONB Landscape Character: Field & Heath Benenden Parish

### Key

- Historic fields boundaries (FH2)
- Heathland (FH3)
- Known wildflower meadows (FH3)
- Area of parish outside the High Weald AONB for which data is not displayed or not available (NB: only applicable where parishes straddle the AONB boundary)
- High Weald AONB boundary

### Summary Character Description:

The High Weald AONB is characterised by small, irregularly shaped and productive fields often bounded by (and forming a mosaic with) hedgerows and small woodlands, and typically used for livestock grazing; small holdings; and a non-dominant agriculture; within which can be found distinctive zones of heaths and inned river valleys.

### Management Plan Objectives

*FH1 Objective: To secure agriculturally productive use for the fields of the High Weald, especially for local markets, as part of sustainable land management.*

*FH2 Objective: To maintain the pattern of small irregularly shaped fields bounded by hedgerows and woodland.*

*FH3 Objective: To enhance the ecological function of field and heath as part of the complex mosaic of High Weald habitats.*

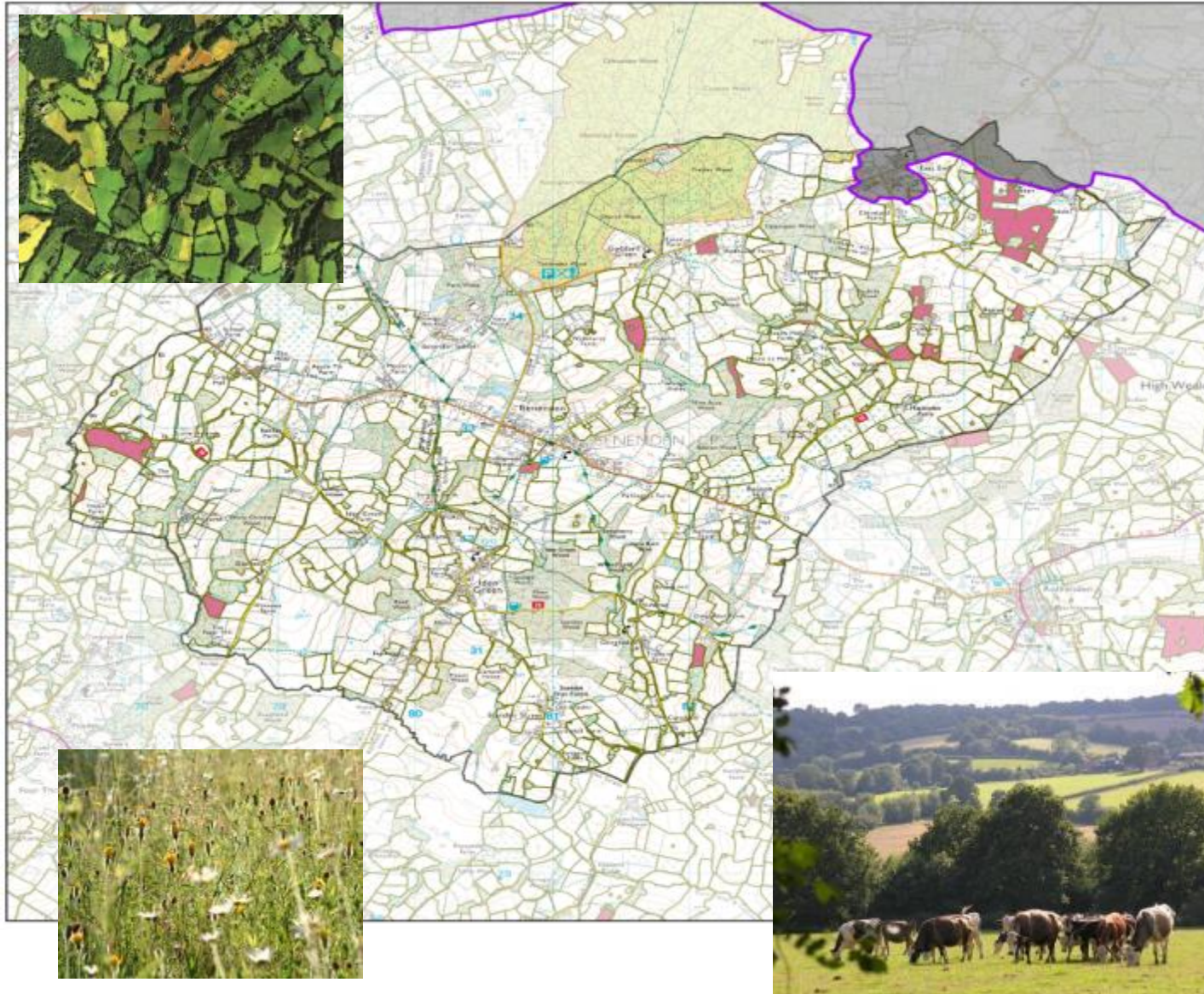
*FH4 Objective: To protect the archaeology and historic assets of field and heath.*

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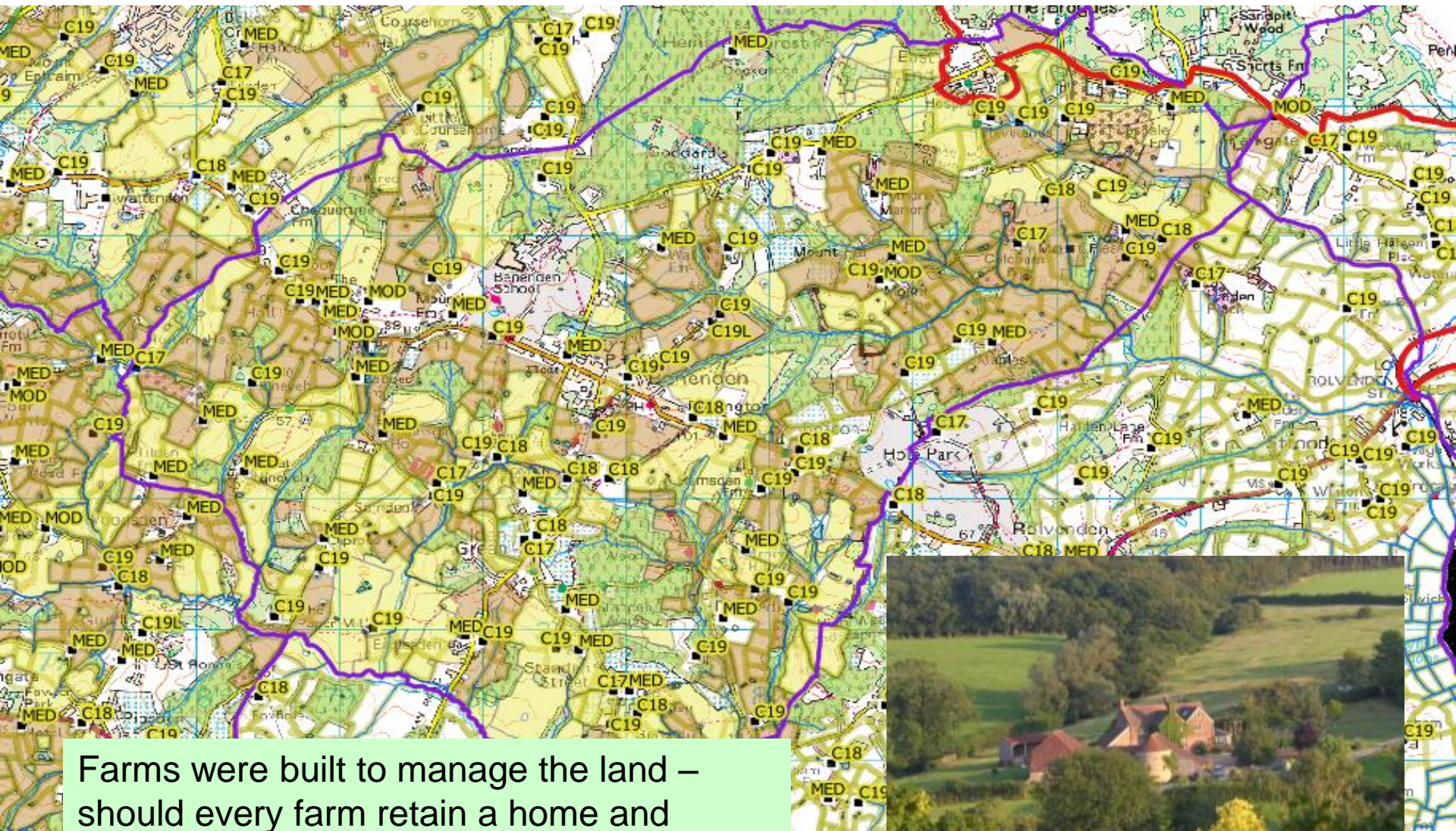
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# Field Systems



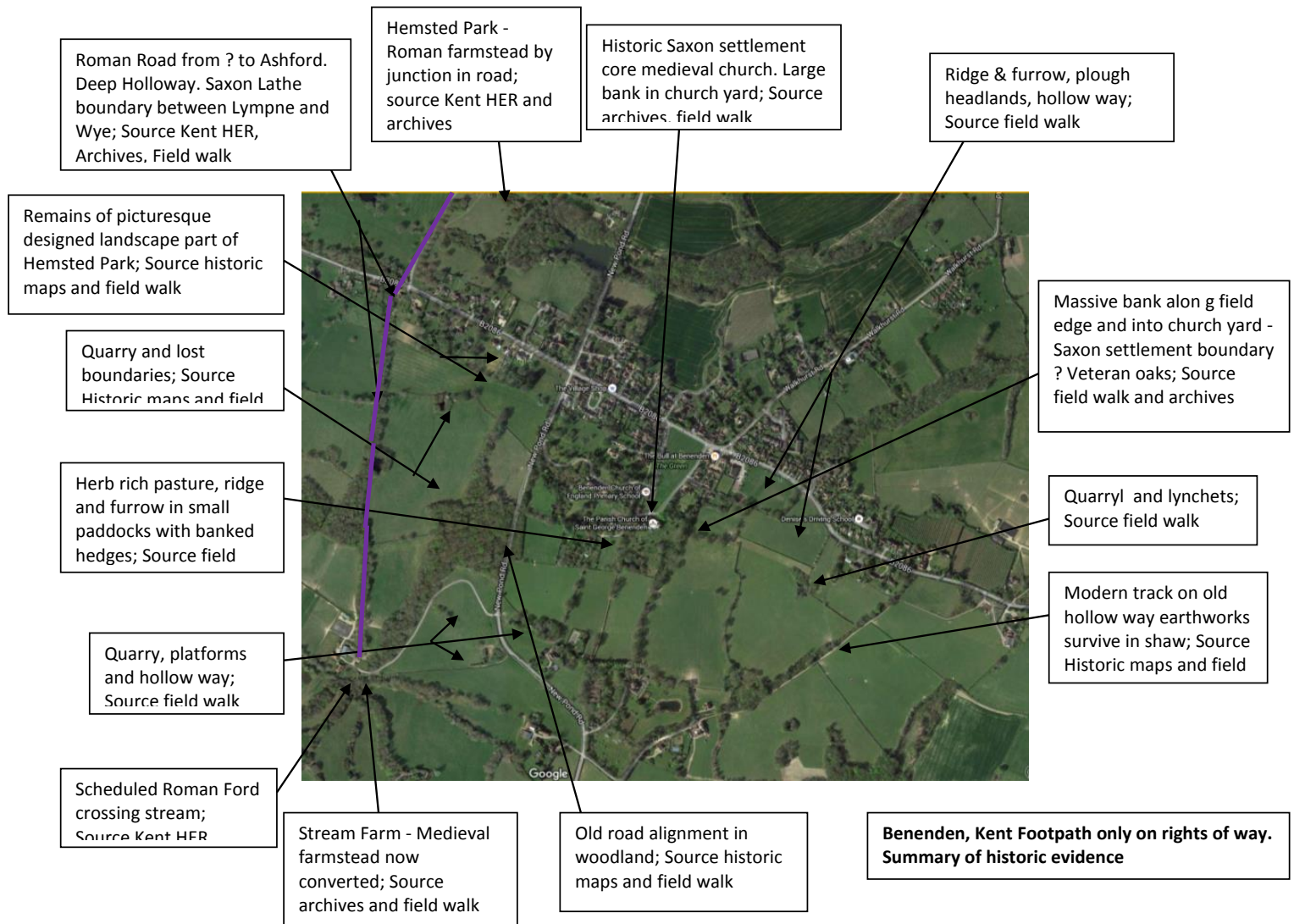
Farms were built to manage the land – should every farm retain a home and workspace for rural workers - AOC?



# Benenden: A landscape choc-a-block with history



## Results Summary: Benenden Footpath



# AONB Design Guide

- Currently commissioning consultants to help us
- Draft Design Guide to be produced early Autumn 2017
- Consultation late Autumn including Design Conference
- Launch Spring 2018



Roundabouts and Cul-de-sacs were first introduced in the early 1900's – are these appropriate for a medieval landscape?



A poor replica of traditional farm buildings lacking attention to the layout of yards and spaces damages the AONB character

**The AONB is a highly populated landscape with many people living in the countryside outside of villages**

**There is a need for housing and workspace**

**BUT we need proper planning, and the right development in the right place**

**Good luck with your NP and thank you for listening!**