

25_02583_FUL - Parish Council - Objection

Application Reference: 25_02583_FUL

Proposal: Wetland enhancement works upstream of Sherborne Broadwater to reconnect river with floodplain, manage silt, preserve open water, improve biodiversity, and mitigate flood risk.

Objector: Sherborne Parish Council

Address: c/o Brook Cottage, Sherborne, GL54 3DU

Date: 21 November 2025

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Appendix 3 - Statement of Community Heritage Significance

This document should be read in conjunction with all documents submitted by Sherborne Parish Council.

INTRODUCTION

Executive Summary

This document is compiled by the Sherborne Brook Support Group and seeks to define the heritage significance of the Sherborne Brook and its surrounding landscape and ecology. This document references a number of international and national policies with regard to communities expressing their wishes and stating publicly the significance of their local landscape and what exists within it. An historical summary is provided which charts the link between the village community today back to their predecessors who have dwelt here over 2000 years and how villagers in the past left their imprint on the landscape. We apply accepted techniques for making assessments of heritage, landscape value and significance, and address the flora and fauna which add to the heritage. We define the important features of the heritage of the Brook to us, and invite support, endorsement and or comment. All images in this document are taken within Sherborne, past and present. This document is a significant update on an earlier version written 18 months ago. A significant number of villagers have been involved in drawing this document up and suggesting edits.

Subjectivity versus Objectivity

An assessment of heritage significance of the Sherborne Brook *to the community* in which its sits is difficult to achieve objectively. Heritage Significance is by its very nature a subjective matter. By encouraging comment and endorsement from the community and by including much detail we feel that others can evaluate our assessment to provide an objectivity. Do our views appear valid or not? Are they based on legitimate facts? Is this assessment presented coherently? Does our statement itself add useful value?

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to define what we, members of the community of Sherborne, consider to be important about the heritage landscape we live within. In this context, the consideration of 'heritage significance' concerns a landscape that was created and sustained by people of this community in the past with whom we have, or feel, a connection. This is a landscape that continues to have historical importance to us. This is our *local* heritage and helps define our community's identity.



Figure 1 The Sherborne Broadwater a few years ago



Figure 2 The Sherborne Broadwater last summer 2022

DOCUMENT CONTEXT

Setting the Context

Sherborne sits within a Cotswold river valley defined by the “Sherborne Brook” a tributary of the Windrush. In large part, the village sits above the Southern bank, as the village stretches from West to East. The Western end of the parish ends at the boundary with the parish of Farmington and the Eastern end by the River Windrush.

There are a number of key landowners including, but by no means exclusively, the National Trust. The Brook itself has **eight** riparian landowners from source to outflow into the Windrush with duties and obligations accordingly and seven of those are within the parish of Sherborne.

Sherborne has a population of about 300 people. Roughly speaking 40% of houses are owner occupied, 25% Housing Association rented and 35% Other rented. 29% are in full time employment compared to 39% nationally.¹

The Sherborne Brook Support Group is an ad hoc group who share local news, historical research about the landscape, and nature reports. We maintain an allotment growing oak trees on behalf of the National Trust and others, we maintain beehives, and on occasionally put together work parties to clear ditches and road grips. There are 160 direct recipients of our emails. About 100 live in the parish, about another 30 live in the local vicinity and have links to the village, and another 30 live around the world with some form of connection with the village. The group is fairly representative of the village as a whole of homeowners and tenants, and of their ages. Like any village there is a mix of those with ancestral connections and incomers, and our group fairly well matches that diversity of population. We consider that the group has given us a mandate to express our views in a document such as this on the significance of the heritage of the brook, and seek support for that view.

We invite everyone to endorse or comment on this statement. The heritage relationship of the landscape to the community is a matter that we can and perhaps should take a view on. We think the views offered here, by members of the community should be heard and respected by those in authority. The Heritage relationship is the relationship of the landscape here to the community and the public, and it is we, the community, who define that significance.

This statement is aligned with a broader theme of empowering local communities to state the importance of their heritage, as encouraged by the Gardens Trust² and initiated by the Xian Declaration³. Historic England set out several principles⁴ which define Heritage Significance.

Historic England’s “Heritage Counts”⁵ paper, of 2020, offers pertinent guidance on why heritage is of such central significance.

“Heritage plays a significant role in society, enhancing our wellbeing and quality of life, improving the way places are perceived and engaging the general public.”

¹ <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/2087575/sherborne.pdf>

² https://thegardenstrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/HLP-handout-Setting-October-2016-v0_3.pdf

³ <https://www.icomos.org/charters/xian-declaration.pdf>

⁴ Historic England Conservation Principles, 2008, p72

⁵ <https://historicengland.org.uk/content/heritage-counts/pub/2020/heritage-and-society-2020/>

We feel the *wellbeing of Sherborne* is inherently linked to recognising and respecting our heritage and its significance.

“Historic places convey a sense of uniqueness and awe and are strong emotional pillars for common values, connecting communities across England. Cultural heritage as a physical resource can play a critical role for community cohesion, collective action and in shaping human health and societal wellbeing. Heritage can also improve personal wellbeing by helping us understand our past, our individual and communal identity and help us connect with the places where we live.”

We feel our heritage is unique and remarkable with the village playing a key role in the region’s history. We feel a profound connection with the local landscape and believe we have a right to express our opinions on its importance and value. It unites us as a community. The heritage connects us to our history in a way no external organisation can claim or decide or define that link for us. We who live within its landscape have an opinion that should be heard. It is our identity. The heritage here is a part of our everyday lives, every time we look out of a window or step outside. The distinctive history of Sherborne is treasured. Our heritage here tells us how this village was formed, even back as far as the Iron Age. How the landscape was formed and evolved tells the story of previous Sherborne villagers, and that is hugely important to us. It gives us a chance to learn from past generations and helps place us within the broader society of the region and nation. Given its 2000-year history (at least) there is an innate feeling of pride and that our heritage needs to be preserved. We feel that we, the villagers, have a significant role of custodianship. We note Historic England’s findings that:

“Living in a historic environment is linked to greater community engagement in local decision making.”

Also, Historic England reports that:

“The links that people develop with places that matter to them reinforces their sense of belonging. Higher sense of belonging is linked to better self and community identification, higher community cohesion and satisfaction with the place one lives.”

We feel the more we express our opinions on the heritage significance of Sherborne, the stronger and more engaged we are as a community. So, the heritage in Sherborne is directly linked to our “sense of belonging” and that brings a heightened sense of community cohesion and satisfaction. The reverse is true – a lack of heritage preservation weakens us as a community. Our community is stronger for our heritage. It adds to the village’s cultural distinctiveness and makes us more resilient.

“Being attached to a place is associated with being an active, protective steward of the natural and cultural resources of that place. Multiple academic studies that use structural equation models show links between place attachment and environmentally responsible behaviours across age groups.”

“Historic places provide distinct character and increase place attachment to their locality. Place attachment refers to the bonding we share with places that are significant to us. It emerges as people get to know a place and endow it with value.”

If the community has had no opportunity to express what we value in our heritage, are we a community at all, or just residents in a part of the country where others “do that for us”? That would be a sad and negative approach.

The National Planning Policy Framework⁶ *recognises the setting of landscape may affect its significance*. The European Landscape Convention (ELC), signed by the UK Government, provides a people-centric way to help manage the environment and associated social challenges, *aiming to reconnect people with “place”*. Every landscape forms the setting for the lives of local people, and the quality of those landscapes can affect everyone’s lives. Landscape in these terms, as defined by the ELC, means “an area perceived by people whose character is the result of action and interaction of natural and/or human factors”. **Our community has been interacting with the Sherborne Brook for probably more than two thousand years. The Brook in its current form, until very recently, is a product of the positive actions of villagers of Sherborne over the ages. Our community exists because of the Brook and its associated features, and it is the villagers of the past who made it this way.**

Furthermore, the Localism Act of 2011 enables Local Authorities at the Parish Council level to maintain a list of “Assets of Community Value” (ACV) **as nominated by local communities.**

We note that the Heritage Alliance describe heritage as part of the “national story” and that heritage has a positive impact on mental health and can improve individual wellbeing. Indeed they clearly state that **“Heritage has a unique role to play in promoting both societal and individual wellbeing.”** They also say **“Heritage is unique in providing a sense of community cohesion, an opportunity for reflection, and an understanding of place.”**

Importantly, we have taken guidance from the **Landscape Institute**⁸ in assessing the landscape “value”. The Landscape Institute details several factors to be considered when identifying landscape value. In a simplistic sense, the higher the “value” of the landscape to the community the greater impact that has in the heritage significance to us. So analysis by the process that follows is integral for us in identifying the significance of the local landscape heritage. It is important to understand that the landscape we value is not defined by the boundaries of the conservation area or owned by the National Trust or any specific land-owner, but overflows from those into other areas. The factors considered are as follows:

- **Natural Heritage** – Landscape with clear evidence of ecological, geological, geomorphological or physiographic interest which contribute positively to the landscape.
- **Cultural Heritage** – Landscape with clear evidence of archaeological, historical or cultural history which contribute positively to the landscape.
- **Landscape Condition** – Landscape which is in good physical state both regarding individual elements and overall landscape structure.
- **Associations** – Landscape which is connected with notable people, events and the arts.
- **Distinctiveness** – Landscape that has a strong sense of identity.
- **Recreational** – Landscape offering recreational opportunities where experience of landscape is important.

⁶ Annex 2: Glossary, National Planning Policy Framework, Department of Communities and Local Government, 2012

⁷ https://www.theheritagealliance.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Heritage-Alliance-AnnualReport_2020_Online.pdf

⁸ Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21 – Assessing landscape value outside national designations. Available from <https://landscapewpstorage01.blob.core.windows.net/www-landscapeinstitute-org/2021/05/tgn-02-21-assessing-landscape-value-outside-national-designations.pdf>

- **Perceptual (Scenic)** – Landscape that appeals to the senses, primarily the visual sense.
- **Perceptual (Wildness and Tranquility)** – Landscape with a strong perceptual value, notably wildness, tranquility and/or dark skies.
- **Functional** – Landscape performs a clearly identifiable function, particularly in the healthy functioning of the landscape.

We note the Gardens Trust recognise the importance of viewing points and the composition of a view as being significant components of a landscape and which has particular relevance here in Sherborne with its famous views over the open water of the Broadwaters.

Our consideration of our heritage here in Sherborne has been aided considerably by the recent work of John Phibbs, the noted landscape historian who undertook an analysis of the landscape for us. His detailed work⁹ has highlighted **both known and forgotten aspects** to the local landscape and has shown us how to understand the context of the place we live in. We have added to this with our own historical research.



We also recognise that the ecology of this landscape has a very significant heritage value. We have addressed this too in this document. Landscape and ecology are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary here in Sherborne it is the unique blend of these issues and our relationship with both that makes this place special. We reject the easy and simplistic assumption that these things compete for importance and value in a binary sense.

Heritage is about the relationship of people to the landscape and ecology. Rather than dry historical facts about who built this or designed that for how much money or exactly when, or which species is apparent on any given day. It is the heritage of landscape and ecology which is personal to those who interact and live within the area, not something to be attributed to a community by the nominal owner of an asset.

⁹ Observations on the Landscape of the Sherborne Estate, Gloucestershire, 2022 John Phibbs. Available to all from the Sherborne Brook Support Group

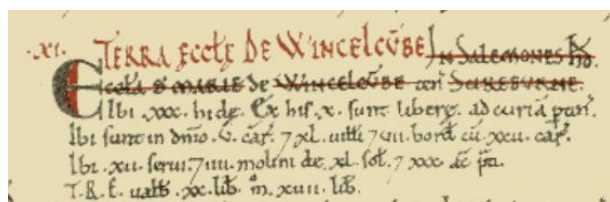
Informed by these contextual documents and policies, it is right that members of the community of Sherborne have undertaken to make **this clear statement of the Heritage Significance of the Sherborne Brook and its associated landscape and ecology**. In doing so we follow guidance provided by local and national government and by a range of authoritative bodies. It is also fundamentally important for our community to value our heritage.

It is also important to point out that this statement addresses the landscape and ecology of the Brook and its immediate related features. There is plenty of other heritage elsewhere in the community too.

DETAILING THE HISTORY

Sherborne sits within a landscape of rich history. We can see hints of Iron Age (see picture right) and Roman settlements. Archaeological digs by the local Historical Society led by the noted Sherborne historian Diane Lovell have found evidence of Roman settlement at the Eastern end of the village and there is more suggestions of Roman remains in Cowham field towards the Windrush. The features of a sheltered valley, a good source and flow of water, and a geographic position near the Fosse Way and the main East-West London to Gloucester road, have made Sherborne an attractive spot for perhaps more than two thousand years. Sherborne and its associated farmland and features were first recorded in 806 as a gift from the King of Mercia, King Kenwulf, to the newly formed Abbey of Winchcombe.

By 1086 and the Domesday Book, Sherborne was the biggest and most important estate owned by the Abbey.



This was reflected in the four mills that are recorded as existing on the Brook at this point, nearly a millennium ago. Four mills in a village is unusual and indicates a key role for Sherborne in the Winchcombe Abbey estate, probably milling grain for the Abbey's broader farms and estates. It also reflects the role and characteristic of the Sherborne Brook as a source of energy and power – its fall and flow rate being very suitable for building mills. One of the key components for a water mill, and therefore a key component of the landscape here for a millennium or more, is the need for a mill pond and open water in the valley bottom, to provide a head of water to power the mill. Mill

ponds don't happen by accident, and this landscape is therefore not accidental. It was engineered and constructed **mostly by human hand**, the hands of the villagers of Sherborne. Mill ponds provide other environments too for nature, not least wildfowl which were attracted to the open water and provided another resource of the those in the village that was managed for a thousand years or more, maybe two thousand. The Brook as a landscape component was clearly of the highest value to Sherborne thousands of years ago. This theme has continued over recent centuries.

Were it not for the Sherborne Brook, the village would not be here, and were it not for the labour of villagers over thousands of years to manage it, constrain it and exploit it, Sherborne would not be here today. This synergistic relationship between the Brook, its landscapes and the community begins then to define the importance of the heritage we have here. If this Brook and its condition were important and significant to the Romans and then King Kenwulf and his villagers here in 806, this is part of a very old and important heritage. It should not be waved aside.

Winchcombe Abbey's ownership of Sherborne lasted for over 700 years, from about 806 to 1539 – a remarkable length of time. During that time the importance of Sherborne grew further. We know a medieval church or chapel existed at the Eastern end of the village somewhere with its doorway preserved in a house. Archaeological digs have yet to locate the exact spot. Sheep farming probably existed in this vicinity since Roman times and indeed some suggest the name of Sherborne means the stream where shearing occurs. One associated geological aspect of Sherborne is the presence of a significant deposit of fine alkali clay – “Fuller's Earth” in the area just to the north of the Village, alongside the Brook. Fuller's Earth is an important resource for “fulling” woollen cloth after it is woven. Its presence here in Sherborne, literally alongside the Brook and adjacent to the human resources of the villagers, gives the pre-requisites for processing woollen cloth, at first on a simple basis and then on an industrial basis. We have no specific evidence, yet, that fulling of cloth occurred here before about 1200 (by foot and human effort), but it is hard not to assume that it did, given the water, the labour and the raw materials of wool and Fuller's Earth were present at the same geographic point. In about 1200 the first record of a fulling mill here in Sherborne is detailed in the archives with a fulling mill on the Brook adjacent to the Fuller's Earth deposits. It seems this was one of the first ever in the country with only a small handful recorded before this date. Again, its ownership by the Winchcombe Abbey “business” is clear, and over the centuries after that the Abbey was protective of the fulling mill, insisting it had a monopoly here in Sherborne. One might even assess the presence of a fulling mill here as being representative of the first “industrial revolution” using mechanical power to make efficient production of woollen cloth, which is of national and regional significance. The fulling mill and its associated landscape was clearly important and significant to both Winchcombe Abbey and Sherborne villagers in 1200. We should recognise that historic and heritage value today.

Our research has been able to identify that in 1608 three watermills still existed in Sherborne, and we know the names of the millers, from the 1608 Survey of Men and Armour undertaken by John Smith (1567-1641)¹⁰. The names of the Sherborne millers were Gyles Blockley, Edward Mydwinter and Raynold Bayliffe. We have cross referred these to parish records were unusually Gyles Blockley's profession at his death is also recorded indicating its importance. We draw from that a recognition that the mills on the Sherborne Brook had value and status to the community. This is pure heritage.

Our research has identified the location of the four watermills and their associated channels, and this research suggests very high degrees of ingenuity in the creation of mill “leats” (as can be seen at

¹⁰ <https://coaley.net/glos1608/>

the sites of Stagges Mill and Ducklestone Mill, and the mill that existed at the bottom of the lower lake, the “Narrow-water”). Again, the work to construct these mills will have come from our predecessors in the village, and we feel an association with them, perhaps too, a pride in their achievements. This is heritage.

The role of Sherborne in managing the sheep of the region was clear between the 11th and 15th C. The wool industry funded the nation. Sherborne’s role, as the key estate of Winchcombe Abbey was to host the annual washing and shearing of thousands upon thousands of sheep from across the Cotswolds. These activities occurred here because of the local landscape where the Brook provided perfect characteristics for man-handling the sheep into the Brook to wash them, (open water, not too deep, not too fast), and south facing pastures for the sheep to dry on. Villagers were obliged as part of their tenancy to provide resources of manpower and other things at the time of the shearing. So, village life was integral to use of the Brook as a resource. Sheep washing probably took place on the Brook between the current Sherborne House and the “Sheafhouses” (probably once “shear houses” or “sheep houses”). So, effectively in front of the centre of the village. The wool was sheared somewhere immediately close by, and packed into wool sacks and weighed, possibly in buildings at the Sheafhouses which were replaced in 1831. Wool merchants from across Europe, including Flanders and Lombardy came here to purchase sacks of wool. In the 15th C, the Abbey, wool merchants and the villagers valued the landscape very highly, otherwise they wouldn’t have been here. That is heritage significance, which we feel can be respected 600 years later. This raises an important point. **In some senses we feel the wool history of Sherborne has been “lost”**. There is little to mark this important and valuable heritage in a physical sense – there is little more than dusty archives. This highlights a possible action to engage with other parties to develop a physical example of the importance of the wool industry to Sherborne – washing, shearing, packing, selling, husbandry of the sheep etc. And that too prompts a thought about noting the importance of the mills on the Sherborne Brook, marking their historic importance to the community.

In the 16th century, after 700 + years of Abbey ownership, the dissolution of the monasteries occurred in 1539. For the last few years of Winchcombe Abbey ownership, the estate was leased to a London merchant, Sir John Allen. In the complex political years that followed, somehow “ownership” of the estate ended in the hands of Sir John’s son, Christopher Allen. He sold the estate to Thomas Dutton, who also happened to be the county’s Crown Lands Surveyor, in 1551. In the 16th C a deer park was created, and in the following centuries various enclosures occurred. We still see deer in this parkland today – direct descendants. The Landscape continued to evolve and be managed to meet the requirements of its owners and the villagers participated intimately in that process. Indeed, in 1658, archive materials describe how different parts of the village divided the tasks of maintaining the banks of the Sherborne Brook. If the banks of the Brook were important to the villagers in 1658, then today that should still be the case or at the very least the heritage significance recognised.

It would appear that in the late 17th C and throughout the 18th C, the Dutton family, eventually Lord Sherborne, invested significant efforts to model the landscape in the fashions of the time. LIDAR images show an extensive avenue of trees in Old Park, defining the formal geometric style of the 17th and early 18th century landscape design – reflected in Kip’s engraving of 1709. Some of the features of Kip’s design, long since wiped from memory are visible on the LIDAR image of the estate. There is a strong suggestion of Bridgeman landscape features (such as a possible panoramic viewpoint, within the village of Sherborne, not just his later work at Lodge Park) and creating part of a larger and more informal picturesque landscape in the mode of the 18th Century landscape movement, inspired by the likes of Capability Brown and Humphry Repton. Clearly the Dutton family valued the Sherborne Brook in the 18th C, and that work was probably carried

out at least in part by villagers – it is right we still value that artificial landscape today as a deliberate landscape according to the fashions of the time. In any event, it continues the more historic concept of stretches of open water on the valley bottom, albeit with a different intent at this point in history. Lord Sherborne had a team of gamekeepers, whose descendants live in the village today, and their task of managing game and wildfowl had the Brook at its centre. That wildfowl itself has become part of our heritage.

We note the Sherborne House stables, built around 1770, are positioned specifically and clearly within the context of Sherborne Brook, to be viewed from across the Brook from the north and vice-versa providing a viewing point from the south across pastures where it seems likely racehorses were grazed down to the bank. Furthermore, its relationship to the Brook within the landscape is reinforced because a mirrored reflective view is possible from a “burst” view on a pathway (visible on LIDAR) to the east aligned with the church spire behind the stables. We believe at the same time a decorative wooden bridge was constructed over the serpentine lakes, again making the view of the Brook from the vicinity of the panoramic viewpoint and the stables as being crucial. If the relationship of the stables and the landscape of the Brook was important in 1770, it should be important now.

We recognise that historically important watermeadows were created alongside the Windrush, within the parish of Sherborne in the mid-1800s. These are no longer functional due to derelict sluice gates near New Bridge. But we have also recently identified the location of what appears to be earlier watermeadows fed from the lower end of the Sherborne Brook at the South-Eastern end of the parish just before it joins the Windrush. These earlier water meadows could be associated with sheep farming and the process of “sheepfolding” whereby sheep were grazed on watermeadows in the day and then put into pastures at night to fertilise. We know from the 1608 survey that the village contained 14 shepherds more than any other village in the county. This, if confirmed, would be important heritage.

Over the centuries a number of landscape engineering features involving the Brook took place. Bridges were built leading north across the Brook at either end of the village, where previously fords existed. At some point in history the lower part of the Sherborne Brook was diverted away from its meandering course and put in a raised channel south of Cowham field, which originally it



meandered through. We do not yet know why for certain, but it could have been connected with the transport of stone from the local quarries or it could even be connected with the development of watermeadows and sheepfolding.

In the 19th C a brick and tile factory exploited clay deposits to the North of Waterloo Bridge, and certain roofs and pathways in the village still display these locally made bricks and tiles. Also, in the 19th C further landscaping of the area in the parkland occurred under William Sawrey Gilpin, his features overlaying the earlier designed

landscape features. The Farmers of Sherborne have played a key role in the evolution of the landscape here over two millennia, and that role we respect.

In the late 19th C Lord Sherborne constructed an early electricity turbine, utilising the same potential energy of the water in the Brook that the Monks used in 1086 but this time to power an electricity generating turbine at the lower weir. That was an important village feature then, managed by villagers and which the village took pride in and should remain so today. Its current dilapidation is a concern. Other odd features along the



Brook are also worthy of mention, such as the eel trap conduit that runs parallel with the Upper weir, and the attempted plans of one of the Lords Sherborne to farm crayfish in the Brook.

For many years the Broadwaters were dredged to keep the historic view of open water. This was last done in the 1990s under the ownership of the National Trust. If open water was important in the 1990s, perhaps it should still be important in 2022.

The lake formed in the Sherborne Brook adjacent to Haycroft was last dredged in 2020 and there is evidence this is acting as a silt trap, intercepting silt before it enters the Broadwater.

For the last few years, the Sherborne Brook Support Group have also worked to understand the dynamics of silt entering the system. We identified that much was coming from the roads which cross the Brook at Waterloo Bridge. In recent years the system of grips, ditches and drains have not been maintained well and we tracked many tons of silt entering the Brook as road run off.

Having engaged with the authorities and the Highways Department, the Group has been largely successful in keeping the system clear and working for most of the year. Road run off is transferred through the grips we now try to maintain into ditches which form an effective silt trap if we stay on top of it.

We have monitored a significant reduction (90%+) in silt entering the Brook from this route in the last three years. We are convinced that the acceleration of silt entrapment in the Broadwaters up to about 2018 was as a result of the failure of the road drainage system. More can be done by the Highways Department to



help us stay on top of this task and perhaps silt traps could be constructed to take road run off. It is clear the drainage system was designed to prevent run off into the Brook – someone in the past recognised the importance of this, and we regard it as important today, although County Council funding perhaps has not addressed it with priority in recent years. Our work on roadway spill, and the dredging of the lake at Haycroft has fundamentally changed the accretion and accumulation of silt in the last three years. It is no longer happening at the rate seen in the years to that date, and that has an implication for the management of silt in the Broadwaters.

ANALYSING THE LANDSCAPE VALUE

Landscape, as we will show, has a value *to* us as the local community who live in it. It is valued also *by* us, as an entire village. If the value is attributed to us by others then perhaps there is no need for such a statement – but because we actively value it and feel its significance daily it is important we put a marker down and state it clearly for others to see. We may not be able to direct one course of action or another but it is reasonable and proper that we analyse the significance of the heritage value to us and state our views clearly. As discussed earlier it is in the nature of our relationship with this place that our views are subjective. We invite others to objectively state whether these values are appropriate or not.

Following the Landscape Institute's guidance for assessing the value of the landscape, here a series of characteristics are analysed in turn. We give local examples of the landscape, where possible and appropriate. Two concepts are used – "Landscape Quality" which is the characteristics or features of a landscape that are valued, and "Landscape Value". The Landscape Institute provides the following definitions for Landscape Quality and Landscape Value:

- **Landscape Quality** – A measure of the physical state of the landscape. It may include the extent to which typical character is represented in individual areas, the intactness of the landscape and the condition of individual elements.
- **Landscape Value** – The relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society. A landscape may be valued by different stakeholders for a whole variety of reasons.

Natural Heritage – Qualities are: *Landscape with clear evidence of ecological, geological, geomorphological or physiographic interest which contribute positively to the landscape.* Here in Sherborne, the Brook itself drives this. Rising in Farmington, in fact the majority of its water comes from springs within the parish of Sherborne itself, a significant number upstream of Haycroft. Historically the balance of parish-derived spring sources may have been less, proportionally. In the past we believe that significantly more water entered the parish from Farmington in the early 19th C when, we believe, aquifers were tapped regionally. The catchment area for the Brook is large, approximately 52 Sq Km, and the water emerges from oolitic limestone. The Brook is famously clear, and we have identified very few springs that occasionally run with some turbidity. One of two



possible sources of the word "Sherborne" derives from "clear stream". The fall of the Brook from where it enters the parish to where it joins the Windrush (and leaves the parish) is ten metres providing plenty of opportunity for mediaeval millwrights. As a limestone-based stream, the Brook shares a number of characteristics with other

Cotswold rivers, but the Brook is currently assessed as of high quality and doesn't face some of the challenges experienced by other Cotswold rivers at this

point in time. As such it is a recognised exemplar and that adds to its landscape value. Another aspect of the landscape is the presence, adjacent to the Brook, of a geological feature of “Fuller’s Earth” used in earlier centuries as part of the fulling process to clean and treat woollen cloth. The natural geological coincidence of a fine Cotswold stream ideal for washing and creation of mills, with the occurrence of Fuller’s Earth contributes to the historic landscape and the use of these features. We therefore derive that the Landscape Value of the natural heritage is **HIGH**.

Cultural Heritage – Qualities are: *Landscape with clear evidence of archaeological, historical or cultural history which contribute positively to the landscape.* There are archaeological indications of Iron Age and Roman presence in the area in terms of settlements. Careful examination of LIDAR mapping shows some pre-mediaeval field systems and a number of apparent Roman archaeological remains in the area, which is not surprising given the broader Roman presence in the Cotswolds. Perhaps more significant is the Brook’s role in the wool industry in the Middle Ages, with its early Fulling Mill, (c 1200) and the key site for Winchcombe Abbey’s sheep washing and shearing operation. The nature of the Brook, with 4 – 5 ft depth, perfect for washing sheep is crucial, along with south facing slopes for the sheep to be put to pasture as the wool dried. This wool industry was a nationally important industry between the 12th and 15th C, at least, and the role Sherborne Brook played in that historical and cultural history is therefore **HIGH**. The development of the parkland incorporating the Brook between the 16th and 19th centuries, involving enclosure and the creation of a designed landscape which moulded the scenery in which we live into what we see today and is indeed worth preserving and of **HIGH** value.

Landscape Condition – Qualities are: *Landscape which is in good physical state both regarding individual elements and overall landscape structure.* In general, the landscape provides a sheltered valley, but some areas are now deteriorating, such as the open water of the Broadwater, and the lower part of the Narrow-water and loss/dereliction of features in the adjacent parkland which is a concern. It appears to be in a relatively poor condition when compared to the manner in which it was maintained in the past. We note also that the sluices of the weirs are currently derelict, as is the Turbine house, but we note and approve the attention now being given to this area by the owners, the National Trust. We consider the relative condition of parts of the historic landscape along the Brook to be **POOR**.



Associations – Qualities are: *Landscape which is connected with notable people, events and the arts.* There are no particular artistic connotations of the landscape here. In terms of historically notable people and events the key ones might be:

- King Kenwulf.
- The Abbots of Winchcombe.
- The Dutton family and Lords Sherborne (and their cultural influence upon the landscape and the community).
- Sheep washing, sheep shearing and other wool trade associations in the Middle Ages.
- 18th and 19th landscape movements



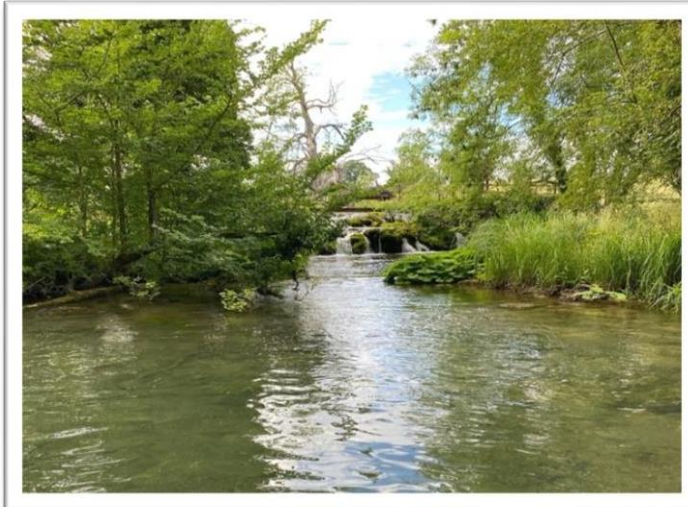
(Bridgeman, Sawrey Gilpin and others).

Collectively all these associations provide significant value to the landscape but the latter two are probably the most important.

Distinctiveness – Qualities are: *Landscape that has a strong sense of identity.* In many ways the Sherborne Brook and its associated valley is a typical Cotswold river in terms of distinctiveness. It is beautiful but so are many others. The landscape has a strong “sense of identity” to the community so we assess the “distinctiveness score” as **HIGH**. This is added to in the sense of an intense mediaeval community of four or five mills and a chain of open water mill ponds along the valley bottom at the time of the Domesday book. Furthermore the concept of a nationally important and distinctive wool washing and shearing activity, processing thousands of upon thousands of sheep every year as part of the Winchcombe abbey/wool merchant engagement, with 17th, 18th and 19th C features overlaid on top of it gives a strong sense of place and iconic views that is very highly distinctive.

Recreational – Qualities are: *Landscape offering recreational opportunities where experience of landscape is important.* The Brook has limited public access along the banks. However, the wider parkland offers a significant recreational resource and indeed there are many public footpaths which have views across the Brook and the wider parkland setting. The former Lord Sherborne permitted villagers access to the Broadwaters, a fact recognised and continued by the National Trust. The Broadwaters and Brook have been used for recreational activities by villagers such as boating, fishing, swimming from the banks for a considerable time and is still perceived as a recreational resource to the community. In the same way that views of woodland are becoming recreational so should the view of the open water from the village road with its wildlife be considered a recreational quality. Improving direct access poses community challenges for all.

Perceptual (Scenic) – Qualities are: *Landscape that appeals to the senses, primarily the visual sense.* The scenic perception of the Brook Landscape is important. Many people regard the views over the Broadwater and the Narrow-water from the village road as the “iconic” view of Sherborne – and actually there is a strong possibility that this view was the one created by Bridgeman if the viewing panoramic point above the road proves to be his work. A Bridgeman designed panorama would reinforce the high value of the scenic perception. We believe that the views from the stables/village road and the panorama point all suggest a designed landscape with the characteristics of a “classic” 18th C vista. Such things as a sinuous lake in the middle distance, both ends hidden behind woodland, a carriage splash, gentle sloping pastures towards the lake side, and dotted trees and clumps beyond, the 18th C wooden bridge (now gone), all strongly indicate the design qualities of this locale. But there are other



views too, notably from the north, of the setting of Sherborne House and the village which are important too. The scenic view of the stables is particularly important from the north.

Other important scenic perceptions are also found at the pool under the lower weir as you approach from the east, an idyllic spot and indeed of the bridges. (Waterloo, the foot bridge and the lower Wadlands Stone/ Waddlestone bridge). All these lead to a **HIGH** landscape value.

Perceptual (Wildness and Tranquillity) –

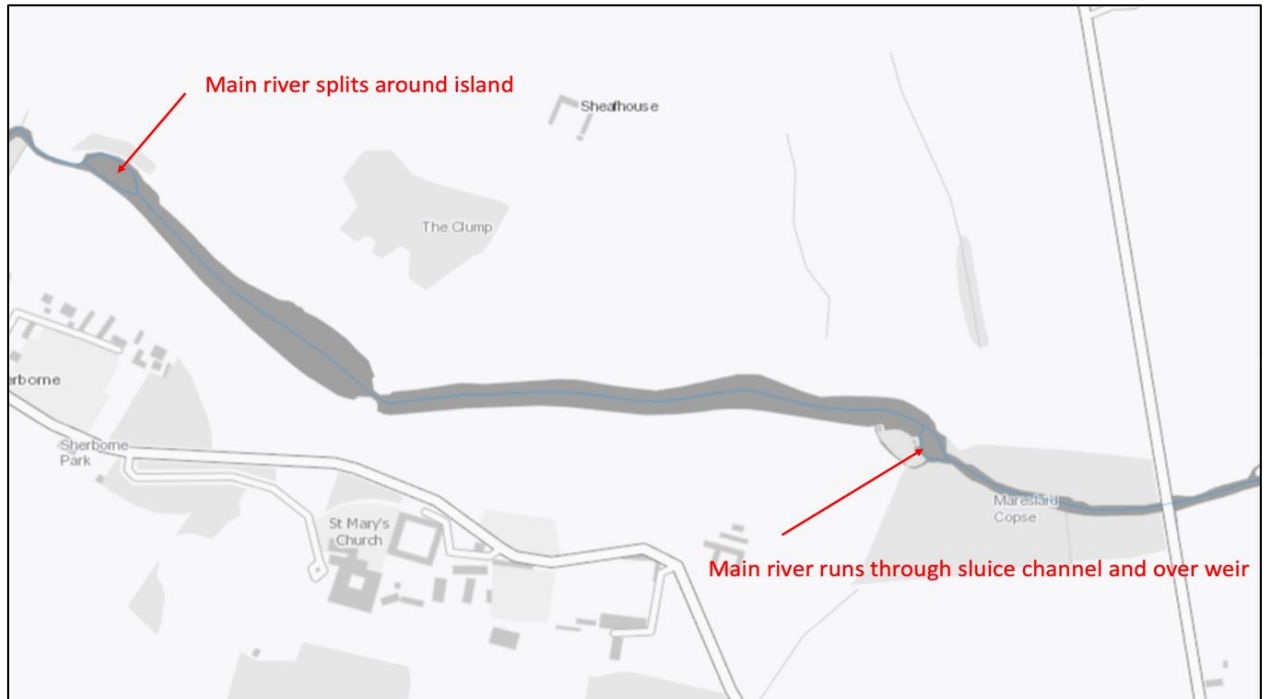
Qualities are: *Landscape with a strong perceptual value, notably wildness, tranquillity and/or dark skies.* The tranquil nature of the open, still water is highly attractive and of **HIGH** value. There are other qualities too – a sense of remoteness, being away from population density, being able to commune with nature, with the presence of wildfowl, mayflies, damsel flies, bats, swallows, orchids, veteran trees and much more. We also value dark skies.



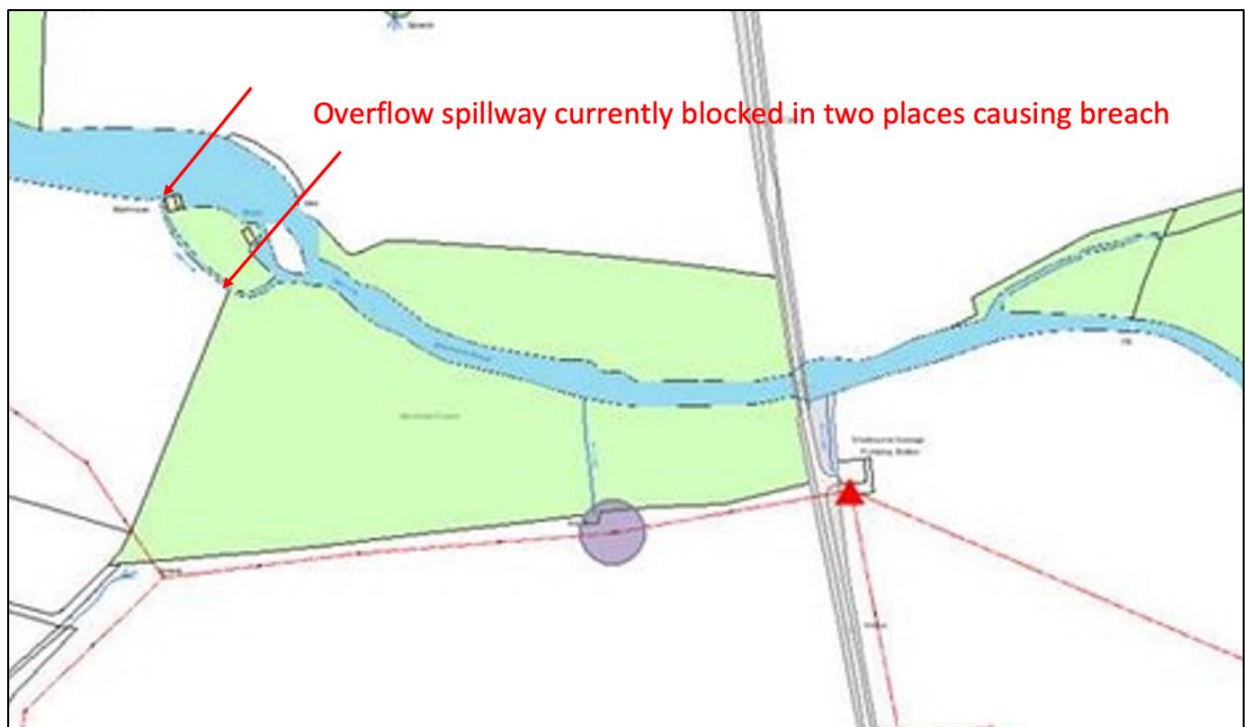
Functional – Qualities are: *Landscape performs a clearly identifiable function, particularly in the healthy functioning of the landscape.* Although no longer performing the function of driving mills and turbines, it is this functional capability and quality, harnessed over the millennia by villagers, and which still turned the electricity turbine until 1950, and more loosely provided power and purpose to the village for 1200 years or more which is still visible in the form of the open water. One might also argue that the function of the Broadwater and Narrow-water was also to provide scenic views. The Value is **HIGH**. The provision of grazing pasture alongside the Brook for 2000 years or more is also hugely valuable heritage.



It is important to note that the Sherborne Brook below Waterloo bridge is designated a “Main River”, by the environment agency. The image below shows the EA map showing the brook running on both sides of the “eye” island in the Upper Broadwater (currently the northern passage is blocked with silt and weeds, and over the weir and through the easternmost sluice by the Turbine house, the latter being blocked and dysfunctional. We are pleased the National Trust is considering restoring the latter.



We also note that on Thames Water's own map, below the overflow spillway is marked as flowing. This spillway is currently blocked in two places noted causing a continuing breach in this body of water which flows to the south.



Hence the Sherborne Brook and the wider valley environment are judged as being a very valuable landscape. The landscape has a high sensitivity which means it has limited scope to accept change without fundamentally altering the character and value of the landscape, whether this change is brought about by future development, inappropriate management or land use, or indeed a failure to manage the landscape in order to maintain the status quo (or to maintain the quality of its valued attributes).

ANALYSING THE VALUE OF THE ECOLOGY OF THE SHERBORNE BROOK

The flora and fauna of the Brook add to the heritage significance in important ways. The ecology within the Brook has always been there but we must note that the human interface has direct consequences to the ecology and biodiversity. In our view the landscape here reflects, if one looks closely, the design and artifice of human hand – the landscape “looks” natural – but it is a landscape created and maintained by villagers over two thousand years with nature sat within it. We have taken advice from the British Ecological Society to help us assess the heritage value of the ecology of the Brook¹¹. Heritage is not fully included in existing ecosystem-based frameworks, and similarly sometimes ecology is not included in historically focused heritage assessments. We feel it is important to include it here. We live in this environment and the ecology in simple terms is immediate to us. The ecology of a landscape is not only considered to be a setting for heritage but is itself valued as heritage itself. The ecological heritage of the local environment is a way in which we the community see meaning in the local area.

Our heritage is affected by a number of factors, notably:

- Affinity with species.
- Recognition of species importance.
- Ability to observe. If we cannot see a species because of size and distance, they are somewhat less valuable to us.
- In some cases, historical links over the centuries.
- A recognition that climate change has an impact on a wide variety of species.
- The role of a diverse species presence in the wider ecology of the area.

The issue of value then is affected by all these factors. While we recognise that perhaps no one species is “more important” than another, in terms of affinity, certain species stand out and become associated with our heritage here. Villagers perhaps have a greater affinity with species of birds visible on the Brook from the village road. Into that bracket come swans, herons, wigeon, the visiting ospreys and more recently egrets.

At least a pair of swans has nested on the Broadwaters for a considerable time and commute to and fro between the Broadwater, Narrow-water and Haycroft. Every year this species breed, and the villagers watch to see how their young fare. Of late they struggle, we think due to the constraining weed growth on the Broadwater.

Wigeon are almost a signature bird on the Brook on a winter evening. Their peculiar call is haunting and evokes memories of when the number using the open water here was much bigger. This year they are frequenting the open water at Haycroft and have been much less active on the Broadwater and Narrow-water. (They were spotted in early November at Haycroft and not been seen on the Narrow-water for another month).

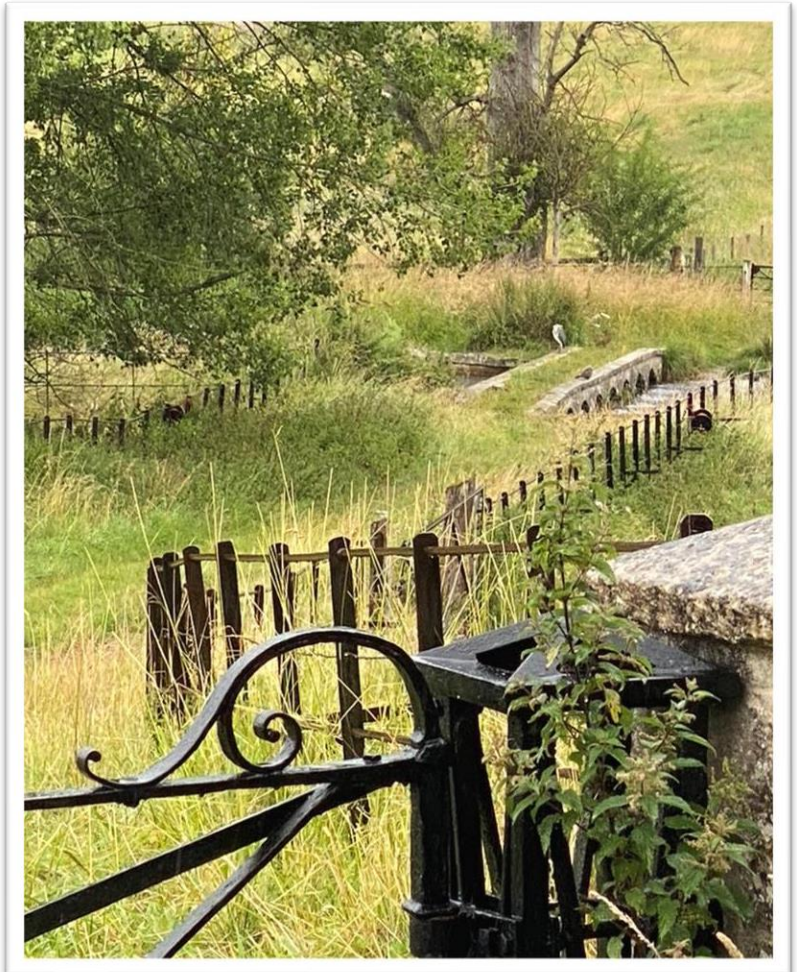


¹¹ <http://besjournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/pan3.10386>

There is excitement in the village when Ospreys pass through in spring, attracted by the trout they can catch in the open water.

Over recent centuries the gamekeepers of Lord Sherborne managed the wildfowl on the Brook, and the descendants of these men live in the village today. It is inevitable that the residents of the village used the wild fowl as a food resource.

Other species of course excite and are valued. Otters and water voles frequent the Brook, although the latter seem intermittent. One key species is deer. At least from the 16th century Old Park, sat on the northern bank of the Brook by the Broadwaters and Narrow-waters, was a deer park. It's possible this deer park at one time extended as far west as Haycroft and as far east as the Windrush, although that is supposition. Historically then these deer (mainly Fallow deer these days) are often observed from the village. We notice their behaviours and note the occasional presence of white fallow deer or indeed darker ones. We note that Kip in his drawing of Sherborne House in 1709 showed deer on the north bank of the Brook. What was important to record then in 1709 is important today. The deer too, shown in Kip's image remain and glimpses of them across the Brook keep us engaged.



Fish – we know that the Brook has a healthy population of trout (which in the upper reaches the population has multiplied five times in the last ten years, according to our contacts in the Environment Agency). The trout population below the bottom weirs was once the most prolific trout fry spot in the country according to the Cotswold Fly Fishers Club. Over the centuries villagers have fished the streams for trout, caught eels, and seen the open water as an important resource. Some still fish today.

As a healthy stream, the invertebrate population is significant. Village fisherman have noted the mayfly hatch for centuries. The mayfly hatch is often remarkable and there is a population of dragon fly. We have noticed damselflies in decline in recent years.



The heritage value of the fauna in the Brook is therefore **HIGH**.



In terms of Flora, Oak trees alongside the Brook have clearly been present through the ages. The oak tree on the Brook with the greatest girth is adjacent to Fisherman's Bridge and is about 6m in circumference, dating it to the early 18th C at least. Other Oak trees dot the landscape, especially when viewed from the village road. Oak trees continued to be planted in the 19thC and we suspect two Turkey oaks were planted astride of a path now only seen on LIDAR in Old Park, to frame a view of the Stables with the church beyond, and the sight angles constructed to provide a reflection in the Brook which has been made to curve at that point. This Brook landscape view was important when it was designed in either the 18th or 19th C and should remain so today, hence making this feature **HIGH** in heritage value. In recent years, perhaps with less invasive land management practices, villagers have noticed an increase in wild orchids along the banks - several species are now common. In places, the density of wild orchids is remarkable.

While recognising the historic engineered structure of the landscape, we also hold high the remarkable nature and biodiversity that is present. The relationship between the community and the distinctive nature in this area is significant. As we daily pass along the village road, all of us glance down to look at the open water habitat, to catch sight of the seasonal wildfowl such as wigeon. The excitement annually in April and May when ospreys may visit the Broadwaters is palpable in the village. We look out for the annual nesting of swans, count the cygnets, and watch their developing behaviours. The joy of a flash of

electric blue from a Kingfisher on the Brook is treasured by all. There is an intimate community relationship with nature on the open water. Fauna viewable from the village in terms of its size and scale is especially important as there is no formal public access to the waterside. These interactions are part of our normal daily life – we may stop and soak in the views and the nature within it on our



way to and from work, to church, to school or to the village shop. The immediacy and routine of this relationship with the nature in the landscape is what is important.

In terms of climate change, having a range of habitats that include both wet woodland, narrow streams and open water provides some insurance in terms of variation. Our understanding that the past saw greater volumes of water flow in the Brook in the period before the 19thC when extraction from aquifers reduced the flow gives some assurance that the Brook can cope with climate induced rain increases.



If the Brook is considered holistically then the richest variation of habitats is possible allowing local species to migrate *locally* to the habitat best suited to them.

DEFINING THE SPECIFICS

In 2019, the Group circulated a survey on behalf of the National Trust, addressing the community feelings towards the landscape. The following are some quotes from the returns to the question posed by the National Trust, “What is special or important to you?”, highlighting the strength of feeling within the community for heritage of the landscape:

“A landscape and surroundings that make you smile and feel warm inside at the beauty and excellence that the previous owners have produced and that I am lucky enough to view. This is what visitors also like to see. It is so important to reinstate too how it should be. Grade II listing is granted on this understanding – to preserve for the future for everyone.”

“Beautiful surroundings in our environment, wildlife (HUGELY), open areas of fields and water”.

“Preserving what we have. Community cohesiveness, utilising our assets effectively to sustain village industry.”

“Its beauty; the vista, wildfowl and ‘managed’ parkland. The landscape of Sherborne attracts non-residents which must contribute to the success of the village shop and therefore its longevity.”

“The view of the Broadwater. The wildlife that exists – e.g. widgeon on the banks and ospreys feeding.”

“The preservation of an important pastoral landscape which includes a running Brook in a designated area of natural beauty seems paramount if we are to protect the biodiversity of this unique environment. The Sherborne Brook Broadwaters are the integral symbol of identity of this village and represents heritage that most likely goes back to Roman times.”

“The view/scene could and should be beautiful. (Not manicured, but nevertheless not left to look a swampy mess). The bird life, which seems to be less and less. (There is so little space for the swans to take off and land - too many weeds).”

“The Broadwater is the famous view that visitors to Sherborne driving or walking see and remember. This has been the case for years and years and now through neglect is rapidly disappearing, along with collapsing walls etc etc. and really does need restoring and become a place in which we as residents can take great pride. Open water is critical to many species of bird life to name a few, Mallard, Teal, Widgeon, Swan, Canada geese, Osprey, Coot, Moorhen, Swallow, Martin. I think the nearest to Sherborne are the Lakes at Bourton. Why did Springwatch choose Sherborne to film here? I have noticed a rapid decline in some of these species recently.”

“Wildlife, history, respect for the community and their opinions.”

“Twenty years or so ago the Broadwater was a clean and broad water with flocks of migrating birds on it.”

“Ten years ago - A beautiful scene viewing along the Brook. Plenty of water birds. The fields on either side cut to show green grass. No nettles thistles etc visible. The whole river valley attracted great attention.”

“Watching the ospreys catch trout from the clear waters. Pushing our new-born baby up and down the road adjacent to the Broadwaters in an effort to get him to sleep. This was incredibly calming

for a slightly nervous new parent.”

We also note that the National Trust’s “**Spirit of Place Survey**” from around 2014 highlighted the key importance of the Brook in the eyes of the local community.

We feel it is important to define the specifics of this priority heritage asset. Earlier surveys avoided specifics and hence produced somewhat vague conclusions open to general interpretation. It is time for specifics. We therefore produce the following clear aspirations for the management of the landscape of the Brook.

- Stretches of open water, defined by the weirs at the bottom of each stretch of open water, with the accompanying open water flora and fauna.
- The water on the broader stretches should be about 30 meters wide, and not less than 25 meters wide over the whole length of the Narrow-water and 35 meters wide over the lower half of the upper Broadwater. This reflects a historical heritage of designed lakes of the 18thC and at least a millennium, possibly more of mill ponds, providing views and open water habitat for wildlife. This is, we accept, somewhat narrower than the historic designed intent which might be unrealistic to preserve. But some stretches of open water are the key – a marsh across the whole valley bottom beside the village below fisherman’s bridge with barely a ribbon of water in the middle is not what we aspire to or regard as meeting the heritage significance of this landscape.
- We welcome rushes and reed growth on the Northern bank, to encourage a broader biodiversity.
- Scrub willow and the growth of wet woodland make sense elsewhere on the local estate but not on the Broadwaters and will significantly (and adversely) change the inherent landscape character of this part of the valley. There are other areas of dense wet woodland immediately *adjacent to The Broadwater and Narrow-water in Sherbrooke Copse and Mareslaid Copse so this habitat is already present without need for more.*
- While we respect that a marshland area may have some value from an environmental habitat perspective, there are places elsewhere on the estate where this could be encouraged (indeed already is being encouraged), without detriment to the landscape history and heritage of the Brook. This might be appropriate particularly on Cowham field to the east of the village, where the Brook originally ran. It is currently rough pasture and has been for living memory, flooded for part of the year. We note the field where the brook enters the Windrush was known as “Drowned Meadow” in 1820 (further south from the currently defined water meadows). We acknowledge some indications of perhaps Roman history in the Cowham field area

We have been encouraged to define areas which should be considered as “Local Heritage Listing”¹². We believe the following components of the Grade II listed landscape here in Sherborne deserving of such consideration include:

- The views of the Broadwaters from the road which threads through the village.
- The built features adjacent to the Broadwaters.
- The Boathouse and Turbine house, and the sluices and spillways associated with them, mostly currently derelict. We welcome the fact the National Trust are considering this area and we believe unblocking the overflow spill way will remove the breach problems.
- The open water of the Upper and Lower Broadwaters, a sinuous serpentine shape as per its

¹² <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/local-heritage-listing-advice-note-7/heag301-local-heritage-listing/>

design, unharmed by breaches. Fallen trees in water, weeds and successional species growth detract from this water feature significantly. We welcome the fact the National Trust have removed trees fallen into the water by the lower weir.

- A biodiverse habitat of open water, which can adjoin areas of reeds etc to further add to biodiversity and provide strong ecologies.
- Open water providing habitat for wigeon, swans, ospreys etc.
- The “Sheafhouses”, Grade II listed structures dating back hundreds of years on the Northern slope, in a view presented to the village from the south. These are currently in a state of dereliction, but we welcome the fact that the National Trust are considering their future.
- Key trees and circular clumps dotted in the landscape.
- An ancient landscape underlying a classic 18th C design around the Broadwaters in the mode of the English Landscape Movement, with 19th C adaptations.

We welcome plans for more tree growth across the area, and note that the National Trust, the owners of Sherborne House, and other local landowners, and indeed adjoining villages all have or are developing comprehensive tree planting programs. We’d encourage a dialogue between these parties and the local community where possible.

INPUTS FROM OTHERS REGARDING HERITAGE VALUE

The community of Sherborne live within a beautiful landscape in Gloucestershire. This landscape sits within the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), and part sits within the Cotswold District Council’s Sherborne Conservation Area. A “Conservation Area” exists to manage and protect the special architectural and historic interest of a place – in other words the features that make it unique. Historic England have listed the Parkland, which broadly sits within parts of the valley in which some of the village sits as Grade II. The current owners of much of the village and surrounding estate are the National Trust, but other landowners own other parts of the landscape. The fact that the landscape is recognised by so many bodies by statutory designation is unusual.

We welcome:

- The Grade II listing of the landscape which includes the Broadwaters, part of. Grade II registered Park and Garden and the need within that listing to maintain *a spine of open water¹³* along the valley. Historic England have also encouraged us to engage directly with the National Trust to voice our concerns. We do not believe that a “ribbon of moving water” meets this requirement for “open water”. This Grade II listing has part of the Sherborne Brook flowing through it, and the built structures within it (buildings, walls and other structures) are both a part of our heritage and deserving of conservation in their own right.
- The situation within the AONB. AONBs are statutory designations in recognition of landscapes of significant scenic value which are deemed to be of national importance. The primary objective of the AONB designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape, but we note the that another objective of the AONB *includes the well-being of the residents* of this landscape.

¹³ Communication to the Support Group from Historic England, 2021

- The situation within a designated Conservation Area, recognising the historic and architectural value of the village and wider parkland and there should be great care when changing anything about this landscape.
- The interest of local representatives, (Parish Councillors, District Councillors and their officials, Members of Parliament and the associated arms of government) and their concern and respect for the feelings of their constituents in Sherborne.
- The role of the Cotswold Rivers Trust in terms of the development of a catchment wide partnership which we would like to positively engage with.
- The fact that the National Trust, the current owners, said in their own Statement of Significance in 2013¹⁴:

“Views into and out of the village, especially those that take in the Sherborne Brook – an 18th century formal landscape of lakes and cascades – should be considered especially significant.”

We welcome this sentence from the National Trust’s statement as being key to the local landscape and our relationship with it. It mirrors our view. It is unfortunate that the National Trust have declined to share this 2013 Statement of Significance in full and have not engaged on it with the community who live in the area to which it refers. We do not know the breadth of this NT statement, and its applicability, if any, to the areas in Sherborne outside its control. All we know is this one important sentence extracted from it.

In our view Heritage is linked strongest to the community which sits within that heritage and should be given voice. Heritage gives the community its own identity. There is a saying that “societies grow great when old men plant trees in whose shade they will not sit.” As the community and those associated with this landscape plan its future, let us indeed plant trees, and also remember the trees, and the landscape they sit in, along with the structures they built on it was created by old men and women before our time. Perhaps two millenia of Sherborne villagers have created the landscape here and lived alongside the nature that occupies that land. Those previous generations understood that nature isn’t in competition with historic landscape but that the natural world adapts to and engages with the landscape. Artifice and nature work hand in hand, and we should respect both and understand where both came from and why they are here. By respecting our predecessors efforts we value the heritage and cherish it. It makes Sherborne the place it is and gives our modern world context.

Sherborne Brook Support Group
Revised March 2023

¹⁴ Gregory A. – Sherborne Statement of Significance, 2013