

LCT 10 Chalk Foothills



Constituent LCAs

- LCA 10.1 Cheddington Hills
- LCA 10.2 Ivinghoe Hills
- LCA 10.3 Marsworth and Pitstone
Chalk Quarries
- LCA 10.4 Wendover Foothills
- LCA 10.5 Drayton Manor chalk
Slopes



Chalk outlier south of Ivinghoe Aston

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Key Characteristics

- Area of transition between the Aylesbury Vale and the Chilterns Scarp
- Rolling chalk hills
- Communication gaps possibly through the chalk escarpment
- Chalk outliers
- Fragmented irregular blocks of woodland

Distinctive Features

- Irregular pattern of woodland and field parcels
- Mixture of pastoral and arable land use
- Chalk quarries at Pitstone
- Halton RAF camp
- Airfield
- Green Park parkland
- Grand Union Canal (Wendover Arm)
- Nucleated settlements
- Recent development at site of former Pitstone cement works
- County roads and railway lines follow bottom of gaps in Chilterns

General Description

Accords with CA 110 Chilterns, identified by the Character of England map and with LCTs RBN and ULN identified by the National Landscape Typology. To the north lies LCT 8 The Vale whilst to the south the LCT interfaces with the Chilterns Scarp LCT 11.

The foothills are an area which links the Vale landscape and the Chilterns Scarp to the south. It includes the three major communications gaps at Wendover, Tring and Hemel Hempstead. In geological terms the area is a zone of transition between Gault clays of the Vale and the lower chalk of the Chilterns

Parts of the foothills have been exploited for use as chalk pits. One of these, College Lake, has become a local Wildlife Trust nature reserve, supporting a variety of habitats including the lakes, woodland, chalk grassland and rare arable weeds. The lakes and surrounding wet grassland and scrub areas support wildfowl and water birds, including various waders, great crested grebe, wigeon, teal, little ringed plover and snipe in winter. Pitstone Fen County Wildlife Site with its Scots pine plantation, rough chalk grassland and fen that lies close to College Lake, separated by a steep railway cutting.

The Wendover Arm of the Grand Union Canal, which is subject to restoration works to stem canal bed leakage in neighbouring Hertfordshire, supports a small population of water voles in the Buckinghamshire section. Enhancing its value as a wildlife corridor are the adjoining hedgerows and small woodlands along its length. These features are augmented by a number of Biological Notification Sites that are in close proximity to the canal corridor, including the parkland at Green Park, Aston Clinton.

The axial trackways leading to/from the Chilterns are key historic features along the boundary with this area and LCT 9. This network is thought to be prehistoric in origin and closely related to "strip parishes". The Ickneild/ Ridgeway cross the area, their status as a prehistoric trackway is now disputed.

The Wendover Gap is a comparatively wide but steep sided valley the bottom of which is occupied by the A413 London Road and the Aylesbury to London Railway. The steeper upper slopes of the valley are utilised for grazing whilst the shallower bottom is given over to large arable fields. The Tring Gap is occupied by the A41 (Roman Road), the Grand Union Canal and the west coast mainline railway. The Hemel Hempstead gap is marked by the A4146 road

The Wendover Foothills includes an area of extensive development containing the Wendover Arm of the Grand Union Canal, the Weston Turville Reservoir and the RAF Camp at Halton - the

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accommodation of which climbs up the wooded slopes of Wendover Woods. The lower area below the camp is open grassland used as an airfield. The northern part of this area merges into Green Park a former home of the Rothschild family. North of the A41 the area around Drayton Beauchamp is historically important containing moated dwellings and old fishponds. The area is sparsely settled.

Marsworth and Pitstone are areas of former chalk quarrying. The quarry at Pitstone being restored to agricultural use whilst the quarry at College Lake is managed as a Wildlife Centre. The site of the former cement works has been re-developed for light industrial and commercial use with some new housing development.

Between Pitstone and Dagnall the lower slopes are utilised for arable use and this is reflected in the large open prairie fields. As the ground rises to meet the scarp face the field parcels become much smaller and are used for mixed pastoral and arable production interspersed with small pockets of broadleaved woodland.