LCA12B River Bourne Valley

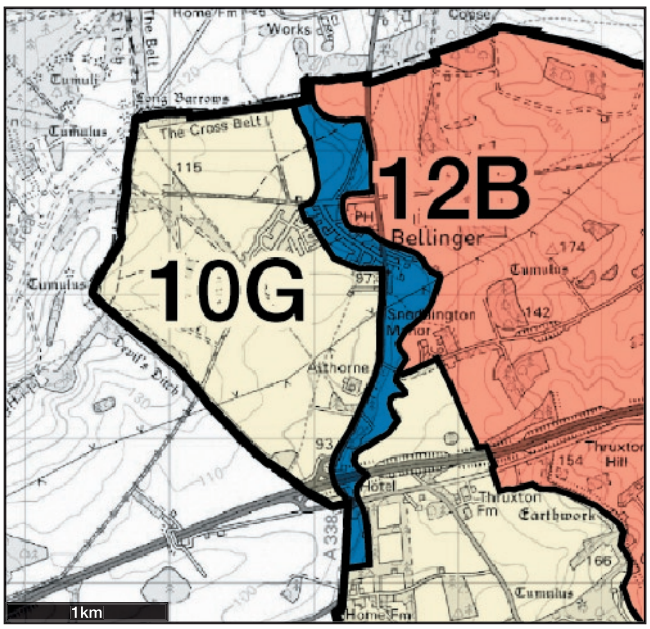
General Description
The River Bourne Valley is an open meandering shallow narrow valley lying at the foot of the western slopes of Quarley Hill Downs, passing through the village of Shipton Bellinger.

Location
The River Bourne Valley runs from north of Cholderton to south of Tidworth in Wiltshire.

Local Physical Influences
Geology and soils: Valley Gravels overlying Upper Chalk.
Landform: Shallow valley with gentle slopes rising west into the Cholderton Chalk Downlands and more steeply east into Quarley Hill Downs.
Drainage: A winterbourne.

Biodiversity and Vegetation Pattern
This is a landscape type that is typical to chalk downlands. It is a stream valley that has an seasonal water flow yet maintains a high groundwater water table giving a distinctive type of vegetation. It is usually classed a wet mesotrophic grassland, as during wet summers there could be a continual flow of water. Due to the unpredictable water flow, many areas are kept as permanent grassland, although arable farming is a significant feature. Fields are divided by hedgerows and there are occasional patches of woodland, including small coniferous plantations.

There is a diverse flora and fauna in the grassland habitats associated with seasonal or permanent waterlogging. Such meadows are dominated by fine-leaved grasses such as Red Fescue, Crested Dogs-tail and Velvet Bent, with a variety of flowering plants including White Clover, Red Clover, Birds-Foot Trefoil, Knapweed, Bulbous Buttercup, Yarrow, Yellow Rattle, Selfheal and Oxeye Daisy, and can include frequent orchids such as Bee Orchid, Common Spotted Orchid, Pyramidal Orchid, Southern Marsh Orchid, and Early Purple Orchid. Wetter areas include Yellow Flag, Water avens, King Cup, and Milkmaids.



Local Historic Influences
The Bourne Valley Landscape Character Area extends through the northwestern portion of the chalk uplands within the Test Valley Borough. The landscape both within the valley, upon its slopes and along its flanks is predominantly taken up with eighteenth and nineteenth

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century parliamentary field systems. These later field systems have effectively removed much evidence of the earlier local historic landscape belonging to this Character Area.

At the southern end of the valley the valley floor is mainly occupied by miscellaneous valley floor enclosures. These elements represent a largely undatable landscape feature. On the eastern bank of the River Bourne lies a small estate and parkland developed post 1810. This park may have had an effect on the surrounding landscape and may have represented a force for change and development within the surrounding agricultural landscape.

Settlement Pattern

One settlement is present within this Landscape Character Area; Shipton Bellinger. This village has a small nucleated historic core centred upon a crossing point of the river, around which a linear settlement has developed which follows the valley floor as it winds southwards towards Snoddington Manor. The later nineteenth century settlement activity extended westwards away from the village center along the main road which heads southwest to the district boundary. There are no farmsteads present within the Landscape Character Area.

Local Settlements and Features of Built Form

- Shipton Bellinger: Chalk Downland. Dry Valley Settlement Type.

Traditional building styles are braick walls with clay tiled roofs and tile hanging.

Community Perceptions

No comments were made on this area.

Remoteness and Tranquility

The area is disturbed by major roads, the A338 and its junction with the A303(T) and MOD activity to the north.

Key Characteristics

- Shallow river valley
- High groundwater levels giving rise to wet mesotrophic grassland and diversity of flora and fauna
- Fields retained as pasture due to recurrent waterlogging
- 19th century Parliamentary enclosures flank the Bourne Rivulet with only a single catchwork water meadow evident along its course
- Area disturbed by roads.

Local Issues

- Increased need for water abstraction leading to wet grasslands and woodlands drying out causing a reduction in biodiversity and a downwards movement of the spring head
- Increased silt loading through erosion of previously permanent pasture
- Loss of unimproved mesotrophic grassland to arable or through application of fertilisers
- Increase in activity and changes in use on MOD land due to the consequences of the Strategic Defence Review.

Designations

None