

Sent:

12 October 2025 13:45

Cc:

SM-NE-Consultations (NE); SM-NE-Enquiries (NE); SM-NE-LNR Declarations; SM-NE-Protected Sites (NE)

Subject: FORMAL REQUEST TO NATURAL ENGLAND FOR 'NATIONAL LANDSCAPE' DESIGNATION FOR THE ANCIENT PARISH OF IFIELD

Categories: Comments Received

To: Sophie Moore - Natural England

The Ifield Society

Date: October 12 2025

Subject: Request for National Landscape Designation – The Ancient Parish of Ifield

Dear Sophie Moore and Natural England Team

I am writing on behalf of The Ifield Society and the wider community of Crawley and Horsham to formally request that Natural England consider the Ancient Parish of Ifield for designation as a 'National Landscape' [formerly an 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' - AONB].

This request arises from the Parish's exceptional combination of natural, historical, and cultural significance, which together form a landscape of national importance deserving of permanent protection and recognition.

1. Landscape Character and Natural Value

The Ifield landscape is a rare surviving mosaic of ancient meadows, brooks, hedgerows, and woodlands, forming part of the upper catchment of the River Mole.

Key ecological assets include Ifield Brook Meadows, a designated Local Green Space, SNCI and Millennium Greenway, Ifield Brook itself, and associated Biodiversity Opportunity Areas supporting kingfishers, Longhorn beetles, Bechstein bats, dragonflies, and rare plant species.

This area constitutes a vital wildlife corridor between the High Weald and Surrey Hills National Landscapes — an ecological bridge that merits national recognition and protection.

2. Heritage and Archaeological Significance

Ifield is among the oldest recorded parishes in Sussex, with evidence of Bronze Age barrows, Iron Age bloomery sites, Roman pottery finds, and a medieval moat at Ifield Court.

The Parish Church of St Margaret's, the Ancient Parish Map boundaries, and historic footpaths like the Millennium Walk all preserve an unbroken connection between landscape, community, and history.

Few places in West Sussex retain such a continuum of human settlement and stewardship over three millennia.

3. Cultural and Community Importance

The Ifield landscape is not just ancient — it is alive.

It is the spiritual and social heart of the local community, inspiring educational projects, heritage research, and creative works such as The Friendly Dragon of Ifield Brook Meadows and the Ancient Ifield Exhibition at Crawley Museum (June–July 2025).

The Parish represents a living heritage landscape — a place where ecology, history, and imagination meet.

4. Urgent Need for Protection

This request is made amid escalating threats from speculative large-scale development proposals such as the West of Ifield masterplan [DC/25/1312].

Designation as a National Landscape would ensure that any future planning decisions are guided by the highest standards of environmental, cultural, and landscape protection.

Such status would affirm Natural England's leadership in promoting landscapes that embody both natural beauty and community value.

5. Request for Action

We respectfully ask that Natural England:

1. Undertake an initial assessment of the Ancient Parish of Ifield for inclusion within the National Landscape designation framework.
2. Engage with local stakeholders — including Crawley Borough Council, Horsham District Council, West Sussex County Council, Historic England, CPRE, Sussex Wildlife Trust, Save West of Ifield and Ifield Society — to develop a comprehensive heritage and landscape case.
3. Issue a scoping statement confirming whether the area meets the key criteria under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (as amended).

We would be pleased to provide supporting documentation, maps, LiDAR analyses, ecological surveys, and historical research already researched and collated by our Society and community partners.

Thank you for considering this important proposal.

We look forward to your response and to working collaboratively to safeguard this unique landscape for future generations.

Yours sincerely,

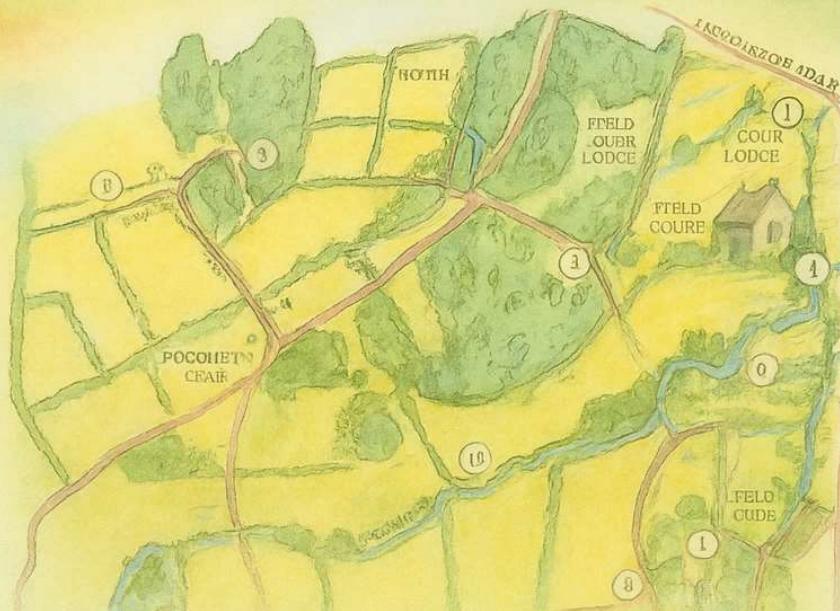

The Ifield Society

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IFIELD – THE HEART *of the* NORTH SUSSEX NATIONAL LANDSCAPE



*Standing Up for Our Ancient Parish –
Protecting Nature, Heritage, and Community*

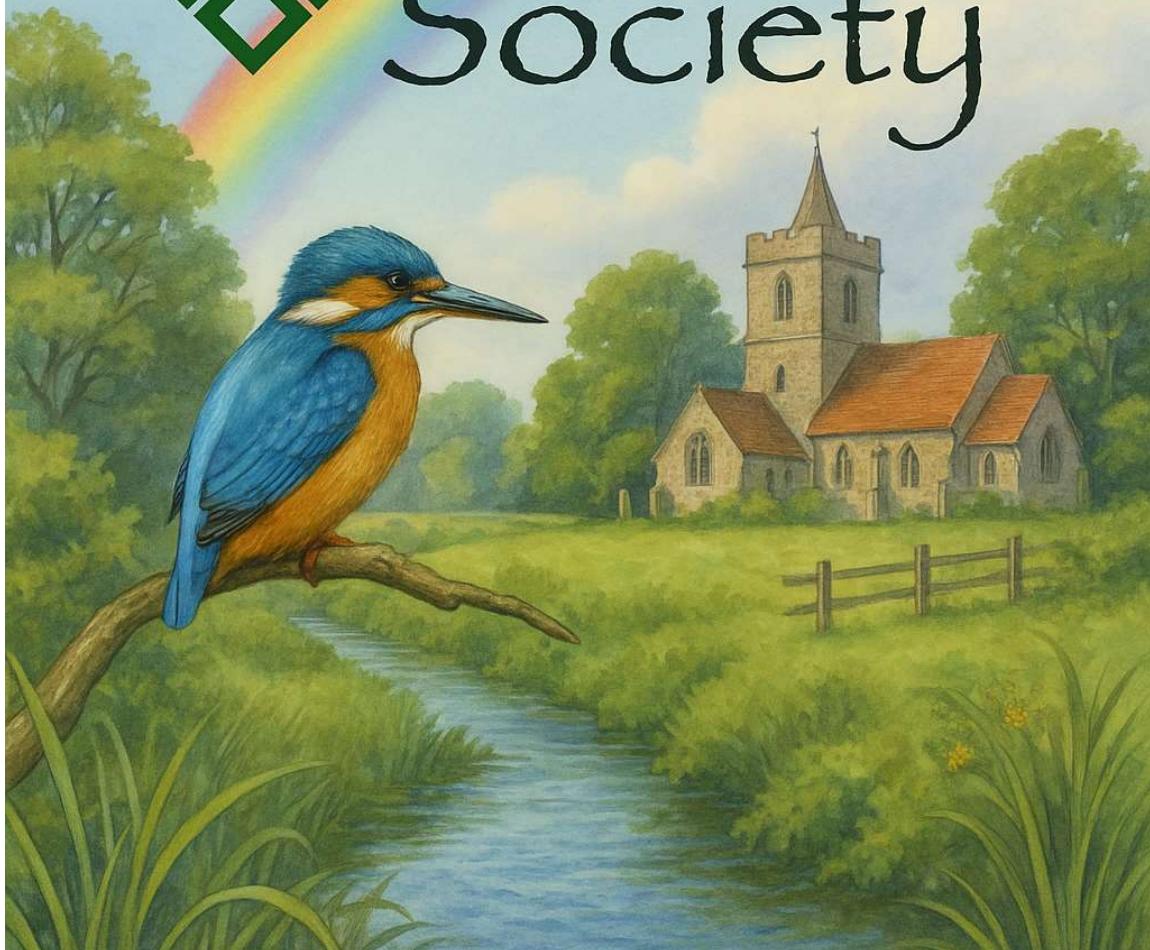


The Ifield Society calls for the Ancient Parish of Ifield to be recognized as the heart of the North Sussex National Landscape.

Download the full report: www.ifieldsociety.org

The Ifield Society
info@fieldsociety.org · www.ifieldsociety.org

The
Ifield
Society



**STANDING UP FOR
OUR ANCIENT
PARISH**

Ifield Society Campaign Poster

PROTECT IFIELD BROOK MEADOWS



JEWEL IN THE CROWN
WITHIN THE
ANCIENT PARISH

Ifield Brook Meadows - the geographical centre of ancient Parish of Ifield [along with St Margaret's Church].



Proposed 'Ifield Park' [Map taken from 'Ifield & Beyond - A Taste of the Sussex Countryside'] - a Brochure funded by Horsham District Council, Crawley Borough Council, West Sussex County Council and Countryside Commission



Ancient Parish of Ifield - boundary outlined in black [Map creation by Ian Mulcahy]



Ancient Parish of Ifield - West of Ifield [Google Maps]

DALE BALDWIN PHOTOGRAPHY



Kingfisher at Ifield Millpond SNCI [Photo by Dale Baldwin]