

Section 2:

Statement of Significance

2.1 Introduction

This section describes what is important about the range of heritage in the UOTD area, why it is important and to whom. The scheme area contains a wealth of internationally and nationally protected sites and monuments but heritage can be important to people in different ways. This section will give an understanding of the overall significance of our heritage assets and elements that are regarded as being of particular value.



St. Margaret's Bay

Photo: Paul Sampson

2.2 Landscape

Around 75% of the UOTD area lies within the Kent Downs AONB. This is a nationally important landscape, designated for its high scenic quality. AONBs are part of a family of protected areas classified as Protected Landscapes by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN). Protected Landscapes are areas that have been moulded by centuries of human activity, where there is a diversity of land use with a sense of place.

Up on the Downs Landscape Partnership Scheme

The AONB contains two stretches of Heritage Coast – the only two in Kent – which are defined as our most beautiful and undeveloped coastlines. Also, the seascape of the scheme area is one of the most significant in the country, its unique character resulting from interactions between land and sea caused by natural and human factors. Indeed, the landscape of the White Cliffs is arguably one of the most recognisable in the country, and has a resonance stretching far beyond its immediate vicinity.

Of course not all of the scheme area falls within the AONB; the remaining 25% of the scheme area sits on the threshold of the designated landscape, experiencing many issues that are not as relevant to the wider AONB: more development, higher population pressures, and a lack of understanding to name but a few. In many ways the part of the scheme area that sits on the threshold of the AONB is as significant as, if not more, than the protected landscape itself. There is a certainly a higher intensity of need and its significance is increased by the need to improve connectivity and integrity, engage with populations and protect the landscape character of the area.

Research questionnaires circulated by the Kent Downs AONB Unit found that the AONB is most valued by people for its scenery and views, peace and quiet, wildlife and public rights of way; 74% of respondents felt that chalk downland was the most important quality of the landscape. The UOTD consultation (local centre and online surveys) carried out as part of the development stage showed that the overwhelming majority of people felt that the landscape was important and needs to be conserved for future generations.



Warren Valley

Photo: Dan Tuson

2.3 Natural Heritage

Within the UOTD area there are a number of sites designated for the importance of their habitats and biodiversity interest. The scheme area contains three SACs, which are of international importance; one NNR and seven SSSIs, which are of national importance; four Local Nature Reserves (LNR) and 45 Local Wildlife Sites (LWS), which are of county importance. Appendix 2 provides a full list of the scheme area's designated sites.

The vast majority of these sites are designated wholly or in part for their chalk grassland interest. Chalk grassland is an internationally important habitat and around 2.5% of the world's chalk grassland resource is found in the UOTD area. Chalk grassland typically supports a rich and diverse range of flora and fauna. This is enhanced in the scheme area by its geographical location: the warmth afforded by the south facing slopes in south east England and the proximity to the continent.



Devil's-bit scabious

Photo: Paul Holt

The area is renowned for its orchids, possessing those that are widespread as well as others more restricted in their range, such as the early spider orchid *Ophrys sphegodes*, musk orchid *Herminium monorchis* and burnt orchid *Orchis ustulata*. The scheme area contains a number of species that are exceptionally rare: the late spider orchid is only found on the Downs between Folkestone and Wye; populations of the scarce forester moth *Jordanita globulariae* and wild madder *Rubia peregrina* – the plant that provided the first ever red dye – are the only ones in Kent; there are only two or three populations of the fiery clearwing *Pyropteron chrysidiformis* and the hairy red ant *Myrmica hirsuta* in the country. The latter is regarded by the IUCN as vulnerable to extinction worldwide. For a full list of protected and Biodiversity Action Plan Priority species found in the scheme area, see Appendix 1.

There has been a significant reduction in the extent and quality of chalk grassland nationally since WW2, and the concomitant loss of species that depend upon it, caused predominantly by changes in land management practices and fragmentation. This decline has increased the significance of the habitat and its importance within the UOTD area. Chalk grassland is a much valued component of the landscape by local people but the management required to conserve and enhance its biodiversity is not necessarily well understood.

The range of geological substrata exposed on the shores beneath the cliffs provides a diversity of intertidal habitats. Many species found here are rare in south east England or nationally and reach their eastern limit of distribution in this eastern Channel location. The chalk foreshore habitats at St Margaret's Bay support the most species-rich littoral chalk algal flora in south east England, and the clay bands of the lower chalk wave-cut intertidal platforms between Shakespeare Cliff and Abbots Cliff support characteristic and unusual assemblages of small algal species, including rarities such as *Scinaia furcellata*, and species well outside their normal limits of distribution, such as dead man's rope *Chorda filum*.

Dover to Kingsdown is an internationally important stratigraphic reference site which provides extensive and near continuous cliff and shore exposures of the Cenomanian, Turonian and Coniacian stages (the lower, middle and upper chalk). The site is historically very important as many geological principles, such as bio-stratigraphic zonation were tested here during the development of the science of geology. Many parts of the succession are fossiliferous and, in particular the upper parts of the Turonian and lower parts of the Coniacian are rich in *Micraster*, which have contributed and are still contributing to our knowledge of evolution. It is also a key site for coastal geomorphology, providing an excellent example of structural controls on coastal cliff morphology. Geomorphologically, Dover to Kingsdown is an essential member of the network of chalk coastal sites in Britain.

The coastline between Folkestone and Dover contains two internationally important reference sites for stratigraphic studies of certain stages of the Cretaceous Period in geological history. The formations present are of importance for the vertebrate and invertebrate fossils which they yield – the area is a magnet for fossil hunters, particularly after storm events. In addition, the succession of coastal landslips which has taken place in Folkestone Warren is of considerable geological and geomorphological importance. The series of cliff sections at the western end of the site, with some 50 metres of Folkestone Beds and Gault, represents the most important single locality for studying the sedimentology and stratigraphy of these formations in England. The sequence has been the focus of extensive research and represents the historical type section for both the Folkestone Beds and the Gault.

A large number of the sites important for their natural heritage are in close proximity to the urban centres of Dover and Folkestone and thus are important recreational areas and open spaces for local communities. The Warren, on the outskirts of Folkestone, for example, is one of the most important sites in south east England for its range of habitats and biodiversity but it is also hugely important to local people as a place to go for casual recreation, including dog walking and camping.

Sites such as Samphire Hoe and Langdon Cliffs attract more than 100,000 and 260,000 visitors a year respectively and are a significant recreational resource for local people and those from further afield. Although more formalised as visitor attractions than other sites, this helps protect their national and international importance for biodiversity.

The consultation work carried out as part of the scheme's development stage showed that the most popular reasons why people visit countryside sites are for walking, views, peace and quiet, and wildlife. A separate consultation with the local Gurkha community showed that the local countryside is of importance to them, particularly for relaxation and keeping fit; and they also use plants from the countryside for remedies and cooking. Some of the consultees even mentioned that the landscape around Dover and Folkestone reminds them, in part, of Nepal.



Crossroads near Acrise

Photo: Richard Haynes

The natural heritage is used as an educational resource for organisations such as WCCP and KWT, running educational events such as bug hunts, rock pooling and guided walks. Naturalists and natural history groups are attracted to the area for the range of flora and fauna, for example, botanists are drawn to the orchid rich chalk downland, and bird watchers take in the numerous arrivals from the continent and rare migrants. The natural heritage is also important to a large body of people who volunteer to conserve their local environment, either through the conservation organisations operating in the area or as part of groups caring for their local site, such as those at South Foreland Valley and Folkestone Warren.

Some of the protected sites within the scheme area, such as the Folkestone Downs, are not a primary focus for the scheme as the site is in excellent condition, under sensitive management and with scrub encroachment under control.

A significant proportion of the woodland that intersperses the chalk downland is protected as SSSI and classified as Ancient Woodland. It supports populations of dormouse, one of Britain's most endangered mammals, and lady orchid, which is restricted in its distribution to Kent. Much of this woodland is currently in sensitive management, supported by the EWGS and Environmental Stewardship, and, therefore, is not a high priority for the scheme.

2.4 Archaeological and Built Heritage

There are a total of 26 Scheduled Monuments (SM) in the scheme area, which are of national importance. Eleven of these are within the urban centre of Dover and are not a focus for the UOTD. On the outskirts of Dover there are three SMs that fall within the Landscape Partnership's LCAs: Dover Castle, Fort Burgoyne and the Western Heights – all important parts of Dover's defensive network. For a full list of the scheme area's scheduled sites, see Appendix 2.

Dover Castle is of international significance, demonstrating a high degree of technical innovation and engineering skill, and is unusual for surviving in such a complete state. Its importance is further enhanced by its royal connections and the survival of detailed documentary sources relating to its construction. The site also contains a Roman Pharos, the tallest surviving Roman building anywhere in Britain, and the Anglo-Saxon church of St Mary in Castro. The castle is owned and managed by English Heritage and is one of their principal visitor attractions in the country; therefore, it is not a priority for the scheme.

Fort Burgoyne is one of Dover's Palmerston Forts and is a fine example of a polygonal fortress. The site is owned by the Homes and Communities Agency and is not open to the public. There are currently proposals to develop the site, which will include conservation works on the fort.

The fortifications at the Western Heights are the largest, most elaborate and impressive surviving example of early 19th century fortification in England – the western end of the fortress lies nearly a kilometre from its eastern extremity. It survives well as a series of earthworks and brick and masonry structures, which retain archaeological evidence relating to the adaption and development of the defences over more than 150 years. However, due largely to the size and extent of the complex, maintenance and security have proved to be challenging. The scale of



Photo: © Paul Wells

The Drop Reboult, part of the Western Heights Napoleonic defences

building conservation work and improvements to the access and interpretation of the complex are well beyond the scope and resources of the UOTD; however a conservation framework for the Western Heights is currently being developed and enhancements to the site may be delivered as part of the regeneration of Dover.

The Western Heights is of particular importance locally, not just for its fortifications, but because it has been designated as an LNR in recognition of its importance to local people, its chalk grassland habitat and the species it supports. It is a key local green space for those who live on the western side of Dover and is very popular with dog walkers. The Western Heights is also of high importance to local young people: consultation undertaken as part of the development stage showed that the site is one of the main places they use locally; they would like to see it restored (including the removal of graffiti) and access to it increased and improved. Amongst local young people it is referred to as the Smokey. The Western Heights Preservation Society is a local charity that works to conserve and promote the Western Heights, demonstrating the level of local interest in the site.

A total of nine Bronze Age round barrows have been scheduled within the UOTD boundary. These burial mounds are found across the scheme area, usually situated on the upper slopes or ridges of the Downs. Further definite or probable barrows have been identified in addition to the scheduled monuments and many more have had their mounds completely removed by ploughing. These monuments

will have formed a network of inter-visible landmarks that influenced the use and division of the landscape in the centuries and millennia since their construction, often acting as the focus for later burials (especially the Early Anglo-Saxon period), as meeting places or boundary markers. Collectively they form a visible and significant remnant of the area's prehistoric past, especially when coupled with other Bronze Age finds from the scheme area, such as the Dover Boat, which is of international significance and testifies to the development of cross-Channel connections at this time.

Other scheduled sites include an important prehistoric element: significant Neolithic evidence has been recovered from Castle Hill, Folkestone, whilst evidence from an important Late Iron Age trading and industrial site has been confirmed at East Wear Bay, Folkestone; and Dover Castle is situated on an Iron Age site, perhaps a hillfort. These sites are of considerable importance for their evidential value.

There are a number of scheduled Roman sites in the scheme area including the forts of the Classis Britannica and the Painted House; these are all within Dover Town with the exception of the Pharos at Dover Castle and the Western Heights and the Roman Villa at East Wear Bay, Folkestone. The Roman Villa is currently the focus of A Town Unearthed: Folkestone Before 1500, a Heritage Lottery funded community archaeology project that is working with the community to research and record the rich archaeological heritage and early history of Folkestone. The success of the project has highlighted the importance of the scheme area's heritage sites to local people and their willingness to get involved in its conservation.

In addition to the scheduled monuments, there are a total of 335 listed buildings in the scheme area. There are 12 Grade I buildings, 23 Grade II* buildings and 300 Grade II buildings. Grade I buildings are of exceptional interest and often of international importance; Grade II* buildings are particularly important buildings of more than special interest; and Grade II buildings are of national interest and of special importance. Just under half of all these buildings are within Dover Town itself.



Paddlesworth church

Photo: Dan Tuson

The scheme area contains a single registered park and garden at Russell Gardens, part of Kearsney Court gardens which were laid out by Thomas Mawson in the early 20th century. Russell Gardens, together with neighbouring Kearsney Abbey, are hugely popular locally and the UOTD consultation showed that Kearsney Abbey was the most visited site in the scheme area. Dover District Council is currently preparing a Parks and Open Spaces Strategy in advance of a bid to the HLF for a Parks for People grant; therefore, Kearsney Abbey and Russell Gardens are not a priority for this scheme.

The archaeological record within the scheme area is extensive, varied and, in places, of exceptional significance. The sediments of the River Dour itself have considerable potential to contain important evidence of the environmental conditions of the river valley from its time before the land bridge with Europe was breached to the present day. The earliest alluvial sediments of the river and its estuary are likely to contain important well preserved prehistoric remains.

The discovery of the Dover Bronze Age Boat, around half of which has been recovered and is on display in Dover Museum, illustrates the potential for such remains associated with the use and exploitation of the river. Later remains, associated with the narrowing of the river and the encroachment of the town onto the river silts from Roman times onwards will also be abundant.

The alluvial deposits of the Dour may provide important information on the early use of the river valley and its role in cross-channel travel, contact and trade from prehistoric times. Evidence for the formation and development of the nationally important town and harbour at Dover, the natural processes that led to the narrowing and silting of the river channel and the use of the river by industry are likely to be present.



Photo: Anita Luckett

Kearsney Abbey

Very substantial defensive earthworks and fortifications exist on the heights above Dover, and nationally important archaeological sites have also been located across the scheme area, most notably at Lyminge (Early to Middle Anglo-Saxon occupation and burials), and at Castle Hill, Folkestone (Neolithic and Medieval earthworks). Deeply stratified deposits, containing large quantities of prehistoric and historic structures, material culture and palaeo-environmental remains also survive at East Cliff, overlooking East Wear Bay, Folkestone.

What distinguishes much of this rich archaeological resource is its relevance to issues of cross-channel contact and trade, from the later prehistoric period onwards, and also to related issues of defence and control of the channel.

Key sites and finds in this regard include the Dover Bronze Age Boat, Langdon Bay wreck and hoard, the Iron Age quern industry and trading emporium at East Wear Bay, Folkestone; Roman forts of the Classis Britannica and Saxon Shore at Dover, Dover Castle, Dover Harbour, the Western Heights, the Martello towers at Folkestone and 20th century military infrastructure.

The geographical setting of the scheme area at the shortest sea crossing to the continental mainland makes this area pivotal for understanding the changing relationship of Britain and the Continent in the millennia since the formation of the Channel. As a result, an unusually large proportion of the area's archaeological record can be said to have an international relevance. At many sites, this international dimension is indeed reflected in the wealth and diversity of the evidence found at them.

Overall, the archaeological heritage of the UOTD area is exceptional based on its evidential and historical value; aspects of this archaeological heritage can also have an aesthetic or communal value, especially in the form of significant excavated finds or sites in which considerable communal effort has been invested (for example the Roman Painted House in Dover or the Roman villa at Folkestone).

2.5 Twentieth Century Military Heritage

A very considerable number of structures and defensive positions associated with 20th century conflict (particularly WW2) are known across the UOTD area. Whilst the World Wars are usually thought of primarily in historical terms there is considerable potential for archaeological remains to contribute to our understanding of these major events. Conflict archaeology is a growing area of research and recent work on WW1 and WW2 battlefields on the Continent has attracted widespread interest, for example at Fromelles on the Western Front.

The archaeological potential of the period in Kent is almost as great.

The archaeological record of these conflicts takes several forms: upstanding structures, buried structural remains, aircraft and ship wrecks, dumped or re-deposited material, such as anti-tank obstacles dumped on the beach at East Wear Bay and portable militaria (recent finds of which are currently going largely unrecorded).

In addition to those sites and finds recorded in the Historic Environment Record, an examination of 1940s aerial photographs indicates that a number of sites within the scheme area have yet to be recorded or identified. Indeed, surprisingly little detail is sometimes known about sites from this recent period, as much documentary evidence relating to the construction and use of these sites and structures was disposed of in the post-war decades.

Although much has been destroyed, the area still includes an extensive and diverse range of 20th century military remains. These include some structures and complexes that are effectively unique within the British Isles, or are only found along the south coast; examples include the cross-channel gun emplacements and sound mirrors.

Overall, the number and range of 20th century military remains within the scheme area are collectively undoubtedly of international significance. The potential of archaeological fieldwork and research to contribute to our understanding of these remains is considerable. With the window of opportunity for recording oral testimony from those who manned the installations and lived through WW2 in particular rapidly diminishing, there is also an element of urgency about the need to better identify and understand this important, recent, archaeological heritage.



WW2 observation post

Photo: Paul Sampson

At present this part of the heritage is celebrated and commemorated at the Dover Patrol Memorial at St Margaret's Bay as well as the more recent Battle of Britain Memorial at Capel-le-Ferne and, not least, the WW2 tunnel complex at Dover Castle. In Folkestone, a community-led project called Step Short will commemorate the 100th anniversary of the start of WW1.

2.6 Historical Significance

The Roman invasion of AD 43 is generally held to mark the transition of Britain from prehistory to history. It is with Caesar's history of his Gallic Wars, which include accounts of his two expeditions to Britain in 55 and 54 BC, that Britain, and the south east in particular, first moves firmly into a historical setting. Cicero's letter at the time of Caesar's second expedition almost certainly refers to the South Foreland; thus the coastline within the scheme area is amongst the very first parts of the British Isles to be described in the documentary record. The recent discoveries of significant Late Iron Age deposits at East Wear Bay provide evidence of the relationship between this part of Kent and Gaul and the Roman world in the pivotal 1st centuries BC and AD. Such discoveries have the potential to contribute significantly to our understanding of the beginnings of British history, and the nature of the transition from Iron Age polities to the Roman province of Britannia.

The UOTD area is relevant, then, to the very earliest episodes in British history. Subsequently, over the course of the last two thousand years, many events of national and international significance have occurred within the area; the raid on Folkestone by Olaf Trygvasson in 991; the brawl between townspeople of Dover and visiting Normans in 1051 that almost led to civil war between Edward the Confessor and Earl Godwin; the submission by King John to the Papal Legate Pandulph on 15th May 1213 at Temple Ewell; attacks on Dover by the French in 1216 and 1295, and on Dover and Folkestone in 1339; the meeting of Henry VIII and Holy Roman Emperor Charles V in Dover in 1520; the signing of a peace treaty in Dover by Charles II and Louis XIV in 1670; and others, culminating in the tumultuous events of WW2, most notably Operation Dynamo (the evacuation of Dunkirk, run from the tunnels beneath Dover Castle), the struggle for control of the Straits of Dover, and the Battle of Britain.

Dover in particular has also often featured as a place of high level arrivals, departures and meetings, at least as far back as the Roman period. During the Medieval and early Post-Medieval periods numerous royals either arrived or departed at Dover, notable examples including Richard I setting out for the Third Crusade in 1189, Henry VIII sailing for France and the Battle of the Spurs in 1513, again in 1520, and Charles II arriving at Dover following the restoration of the monarchy in 1660.

As the stretch of coast at the shortest crossing to the continent, the area has also inevitably been the point of arrival or departure for numerous noteworthy channel crossings, including the first crossing by hot air balloon by Blanchard and Jefferies (1785), the first channel swim by Captain Webb (1875), and the first crossing by fixed wing aircraft by Blériot (1909).

The South Foreland lighthouse was used by Guglielmo Marconi during his work on radio waves, receiving the world's first ship-to-shore radio transmission on Christmas

Even 1898, from the East Goodwin lightship. In the following year the lighthouse set another first when it exchanged wireless messages across the Channel to Wimereux near Boulogne in France.

The ultimate Channel crossing was finally achieved in 1994 when the Channel Tunnel was opened for business. The construction of the Channel Tunnel along with the associated road and rail infrastructure is arguably the most significant event to have taken place in the scheme area during the latter half of the 20th century. It has had a significant impact on the landscape and local people.



Collection of Dover Museum

French and British Channel Tunnel excavations meet

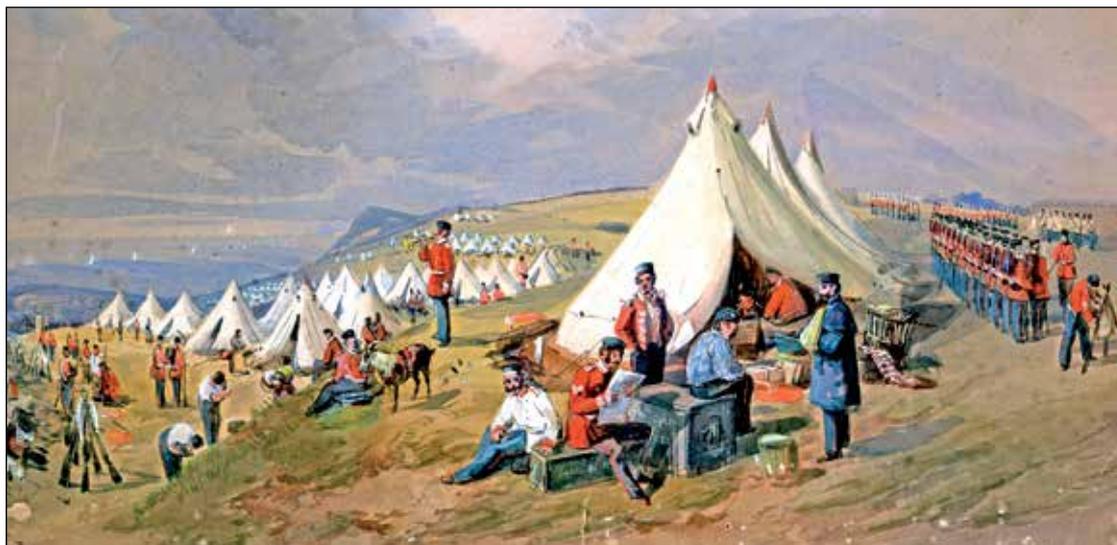
The over-riding themes that link most of the major historic events to have occurred in and around the scheme area are inevitably to do with the relationship between Britain and the European mainland, whether in the form of trade and exchange, diplomatic and cultural contacts, or conflict. It is also these themes that underlie the cultural significance of the area, as discussed in the next section.

2.7 Cultural and Human Significance

The cultural and human importance of the UOTD area, as reflected through the archaeological and historical records, is of exceptional significance. This is primarily the result of the area's strategic location, forming the northern coast of the Dover Straits. These straits have been the shortest stretch of sea between the British Isles and mainland Europe since the Mesolithic period, and effectively form a choke point between the North Sea and the wider English Channel, both important areas for maritime travel and exchange from at least the Neolithic period onwards.

Human activity in the scheme area over the last 8,000 years has thus taken place within a context of regular actual or potential contact with populations and groups on the continent. In many periods, for example the Bronze Age and the Early Anglo-Saxon period, there is good evidence to suggest that sections of the population of the scheme area had more in common with near-continental populations than with inland British populations. At other times, especially during the Modern period, the Channel has represented more of a cultural and political barrier than a bridge, and this is reflected in the extensive remains on

both sides of the Straits of Dover associated with actual or potential conflict. But whether associated with conflict or more peaceful relationships, the international dimension to the area's past is a constant.



Collection of Dover Museum

The Camp of the 41st Regiment on Dover Heights, Lithograph, William Burgess, 1856

Probably the most widely recognised element of this longstanding identification of the Folkestone and Dover area with the sea and seafaring are the White Cliffs themselves. The White Cliffs have enormous aesthetic value; they are an iconic and dramatic landmark visible from the sea, presenting a strong face and lasting impressions to travellers entering and leaving the country. The presence of Dover Castle sitting on the White Cliffs adds to the aesthetic sense the cliffs provide.

There are numerous historical references to the White Cliffs, from Cicero's letter referring to Caesar's attempted invasion in 55 BC, to their mention by Shakespeare in *King Lear* and their immortalisation in the 1942 song, sung by Vera Lynn, which summed up the spirit of the nation during WW2. Thus the White Cliffs, which form most of the coastal stretch of the scheme area, are firmly embedded in the national (and international) consciousness as a symbol of departure and arrival from our nation's shores, and as a bulwark of defence against continental threats. The White Cliffs provide a strong sense of place to the people of the scheme area and visitors as well.

The chalk grassland landscape of the scheme area is of great significance to its cultural heritage. There is a rich supply of place names that stem from former land management practices over the centuries, which highlight the importance of livestock management and a mixed agrarian economy over hundreds of years. The traditions of stock fairs and related festivals and celebrations demonstrate the historical and cultural importance of livestock farming to the area.

The cultural importance of the diversity and the impressiveness of the chalk grassland's flowers and insects are well documented through the ages by naturalists and poets alike, responding to a sensitively managed landscape.

A number of museums operate within the UOTD area: Dover Museum is the only local authority-run museum in the area, but it houses regionally and nationally important collections, including the Bronze Age Boat. It runs an active education service and has a vibrant Friends' organisation. Other museums, including the Battle of Britain Museum at Hawkinge, Dover Transport Museum, Roman Painted House, Crabble Corn Mill, St. Margaret's Bay Museum, and the Women's Land Army Museum at Farthingloe, are privately run but make a major contribution to the curation and preservation of the area's past, alongside major attractions like Dover Castle.

In addition, bodies such as the Dover Archaeological Group, Alkham Valley Project, Dover Society, Folkestone People's History Centre, Folkestone Research Archaeology Group, Folkestone History Resource Centre, the Elham Valley Line Trust, various parish-based local history groups, Kent Archaeological Society, Western Heights Preservation Society and others are active within the scheme area.

Coupled with the interest groups and volunteers mentioned earlier in this section, it is evident that there is a significant body of people who are interested in and care about the heritage of the scheme area; these will provide a ready pool of people who can be engaged in aspects of the delivery of the UOTD.

2.8 Importance to Local Communities

Throughout this section we have identified specific aspects of the heritage that are important to local communities, including the considerable amount of groups already engaged in the heritage; but it is worth reiterating separately some of the findings from the consultation work carried out as part of the development stage.

The local centre survey was a face-to-face survey carried out across the scheme area. The survey was random and therefore respondents were not necessarily engaged in the landscape or heritage. 89% of the



Russell Gardens

Photo: Anita Lockett



respondents were aware of the importance of the landscape and heritage of the scheme area; with a further 97% feeling that the area's landscape and heritage should be conserved for the future.

The most visited sites were Kearsney Abbey and Bushy Ruff, Samphire Hoe, Dover Castle and Folkestone Warren. The main reason respondents to the local centre survey visited the sites was because they are somewhere to take children and family.

Other popular reasons were walking, dog walking, nature and wildlife, history and local culture.

The online survey, by its very nature, was more selective, with respondents more likely to already be engaged. Over 90% of the respondents felt that the landscape and heritage was important and should be conserved for the future. The sites most visited by respondents were exactly the same as with the local centre survey: Kearsney Abbey and Bushy Ruff, Samphire Hoe, Dover Castle and Folkestone Warren, with the addition of the Western Heights. The main reason people visited these sites was for walking; other popular reasons were attractive views, fresh air, and nature and wildlife.

Participants in the consultation work with young people showed that they regularly visit their local sites, especially Western Heights and the Folkestone Warren, valuing such areas as a place to hang out and find calm to 'clear their heads'.

The Gurkha community like to visit the countryside for learning, relaxation and keeping fit – their use of sites is largely determined by the proximity to where they live. Other respondents from Lithuania, Latvia and Poland enjoy the scenery and historic locations of the scheme area.

Below are some of the natural and historic features that local people feel are significant and valuable to the scheme area:

"[Samphire Hoe] has nice easy walks for all the family. Sea, shore and greenery to enjoy; easy access and good parking."

"[The Warren] has beautiful paths down to the sea, good country for walking and exploring, great views, good swimming in summer and a pleasant escape from the world and its cares."

"[Kearsney Abbey and Bushy Ruff] are great for dog walking, picnics and for children."

"This area is full of history and is wonderful to visit and enjoy the environment and surroundings."

"At Langdon Cliffs the view is amazing I love watching the ferries or taking a walk."

"Western Heights is an amazing site that is little known and should be a rival to Dover Castle for visitor interest."

"Sugar Loaf and Holywell in Folkestone have lots of historic tales about them."

"The White Cliffs are iconic."

"Neolithic burial grounds were exposed on Dover Hill, Folkestone in the late 1920s indicating a settlement following the last ice age 10,000 years ago and the severing of the land bridge between Kent and the Continent."

"Scarce forester moth, crown vetch, Cyprus spurge, Adonis blue and common blue butterflies, ermine moths, giant cave spiders, adders, slow worms, all common chalk downland plants, a variety of orchids, jay-sown oaks, buzzards, snipe, extensive badgers' setts, the occasional hare, sea buckthorn. For anyone studying this amazing system, Whinless Down is a perfect example of chalk downland."

"St Margaret's Bay has great rockpools, full of sea life."

"The dig on the east cliff Folkestone, Martello towers, Dover Castle brings visitors to Dover who then discover all the other places of natural beauty in the area, it helps our economy."

"I love all the history of the Grand shaft and Drop redoubt."

"White cliffs, the chalk grasslands in the area, the viaduct in Folkestone, Dover Castle, the beautiful old disused station on the harbour arm in Folkestone."



Photo: Dan Tuson

St John's Commandery, Swingfield