

## Summary Descriptions for Huntington Green Spaces

The greenspace areas for Huntington Parish can be split approximately into 4 main groupings, based on their geography.

a) The Village Centre Green Space areas would form a contiguous block of adjoining lands, running roughly north – south from Huntington Castle (1) on the northern boundary of the parish, down to Church Coppice (6). The areas are bound by the minor roads running from the village centre south to the Church, into the Arrow Valley and Brilley beyond, West to Hengoed (in Wales) and east to Mahollam.

Huntington Castle (1) is an imposing earthwork with remains of the stone castle structure. This makes it nationally important as a Scheduled Ancient Monument. Part of the site consists of broadleaf woodland, a priority habitat but likely to be relatively recent (it is not shown on 1<sup>st</sup> Edition OS Maps of the site). Its value for this green space is to form a wooded connection to adjoining ancient woodland and hedgerows. Management of this wood in a controlled manner without degrading the habitat value, would benefit the site in terms of visual interest, biodiversity and protection of the historic features. Public footpaths run over the castle mound.

The Central Areas (2) and (3) between Lower House Farm, Upper House Farm and The Swan tavern are pasture, partitioned into smaller fields by old and recent hedgerows. A number of veteran boundary trees can be found growing around the sites. These areas may form part of the mediaeval town of Huntington and anecdotally the ground is said to be too stony to be suitable for cultivation and hence may be more beneficial to wildlife and biodiversity.

Central Area (4) is the landscaped grounds of Huntington Court. This more structured elements of this 19<sup>th</sup> Century designed landscape, form a something of a contrast to the pastoral and arable farmlands around, with a formal walled garden and shrubbery. A public footpath runs along the drive and around the back of the site past the church of St. Thomas a Becket.

Church Coppice (6) is associated to the Court and comprises ancient as well as replanted woodland. The site is one of the larger areas of woodland in the parish and has a public footpath running through and around it. Historically it was a mixed woodland, with a spring to the south of the Court which ran through the wood and fed a small designed water feature in front of the house.

Huntington Church (9) is historically important to the parish being a listed building and its position being significant to the sighting of Huntington Court. The site has importance for biodiversity with Huntington Churchyard & Environs being recognised as a special wildlife site for its ground flora. There is public access through the churchyard to Church Coppice.

In terms of landscape these green space areas collectively (14.5Ha), are sufficiently different in characteristics, not to be considered as single extensive tract of land. They will form a distinct separation between cultivated farming on their eastern and western sides. The northern boundary also marks the border between England and Wales. In terms of habitat, this is characterised by a broad line of trees and hedges heading south west to north east and forming a connecting habitat between the Gladestry Brook valley and its important wildlife sights to the north and the Arrow Valley to the south.

b) The second grouping of green spaces, include the unique geological feature known as the "Rainbow Valley". This formation is a steep sided, arc shaped valley between Hell Wood and Red Hill Wood, running down as far as Huntington Park (10) and is believed to be a subglacial channel formed at the ice margin when the glacier and its deposits blocked the Arrow Valley. It is a regionally important geological site. No part of the valley floor, ridge tops or sides have public access but the general terrain can be appreciated on foot from an adjoining right of way, crossing the southern mouth of the valley.

Hell Wood (12) cloaks the top and upper sides of the valley and is a Special Wildlife Site as semi-natural ancient woodland. The valley floor and north facing slopes to Red Hill Wood (14) are also a Special Wildlife Site notable for their ground flora. The channel runs North East into an area of fen and spring-fed ponds and damp woodland (13), which then feed into the nearby Special Wildlife Site of the River Arrow.

Part of Site (13) is being restored as part of the designed landscape of Huntington Park (10). It is notable for its biodiversity, given the continuity of habitat over time and range of habitats being created. It demonstrates the reinvigoration of 19th century parkland in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Turret Castle, in Hell Wood, (21) is thought to be an 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> century castle perhaps predating the castle at Huntington (1). It is noted for its good state of preservation.

c) The third set of green spaces form a connecting group along the River Arrow corridor (15 to 20 on the maps). This provides a natural riparian corridor along the borders of the neighbouring parishes of Kington Rural, Brilley and Powys. Several of these sites overlap the historic boundary of Huntington Deer Park, although little (if any) evidence of this exists on the ground.

The River Arrow is a special wildlife noted as “A fast flowing river with a rocky substrate in its upper reaches. There is a good margin of mostly alder, willow, holly and more notably black poplar. Aquatic and marginal plants include yellow water-lily, marsh speedwell and purple loosestrife. Various bryophytes grow on the rocks. The site is good for birds, heron, sand martin and kingfisher being amongst those recorded. Otter is known to frequent the river.”

Starting at the downstream (north eastern end) site 20 includes a special wildlife site at Park Style Mill which is “A small unimproved wet meadow with rushes, sedges, meadowsweet, common marsh bedstraw, greater birds-foot trefoil, knapweed, catsear, tormentil, meadow vetchling and devils-bit scabious.” The area comprises a mix of grazed pasture, deciduous woodland and the “Mill Race” stream. The historic interest is the southern boundary of the deerpark of Huntington Park.

Moving upstream, site 19 is also grazing land, noted for a small number of wet hollows including the special wildlife site of the Marsh Near Burnt Hengoed – “a marshy area which supports marsh cinquefoil, bogbean, three species of sphagnum and rare species of sedge.” Within this is a fragment of ancient woodland.

Site 18 and 15 on the northern side of the river includes land are largely cultivated with the main ecological interest being the river itself and some adjacent, sheep-grazed pasture with a few notable veteran trees and fragmentary woodland. Llanarrow Cottage and Halls Mill are the main historic features of the sites. Site 17 is also grazed pasture showing extensive mole activity in aerial imaging. Site 16 likewise is grazed using cattle, with a shrubby line of trees following the course of a historic mill leat which fed water to Halls Mill from a weir upstream in the river Arrow.

d) The final set of green spaces are scattered sites around the settlements of Upper Hengoed and Middle Hengoed. Gorse Plantation (8) as the name suggests is plantation woodland of some size in the context of the parish. Historic maps indicate this to have been conifer planted in the later part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is now largely deciduous woodland.

Site 22 is a scheduled monument of a medieval motte and castle which may have had either English or Welsh origins. The site sits amongst a scattering of trees, hedgerows and grazed pasture.

Site 8 is the Goffs Endowed Day School and Huntingdon United Reformed Church which have largely historic value to the community of the parish as 18<sup>th</sup> century buildings. The churchyard may have some botanical interest being a fragment of largely undisturbed grassland situated, in the network of hedgerows around the church and Upper Hengoed.