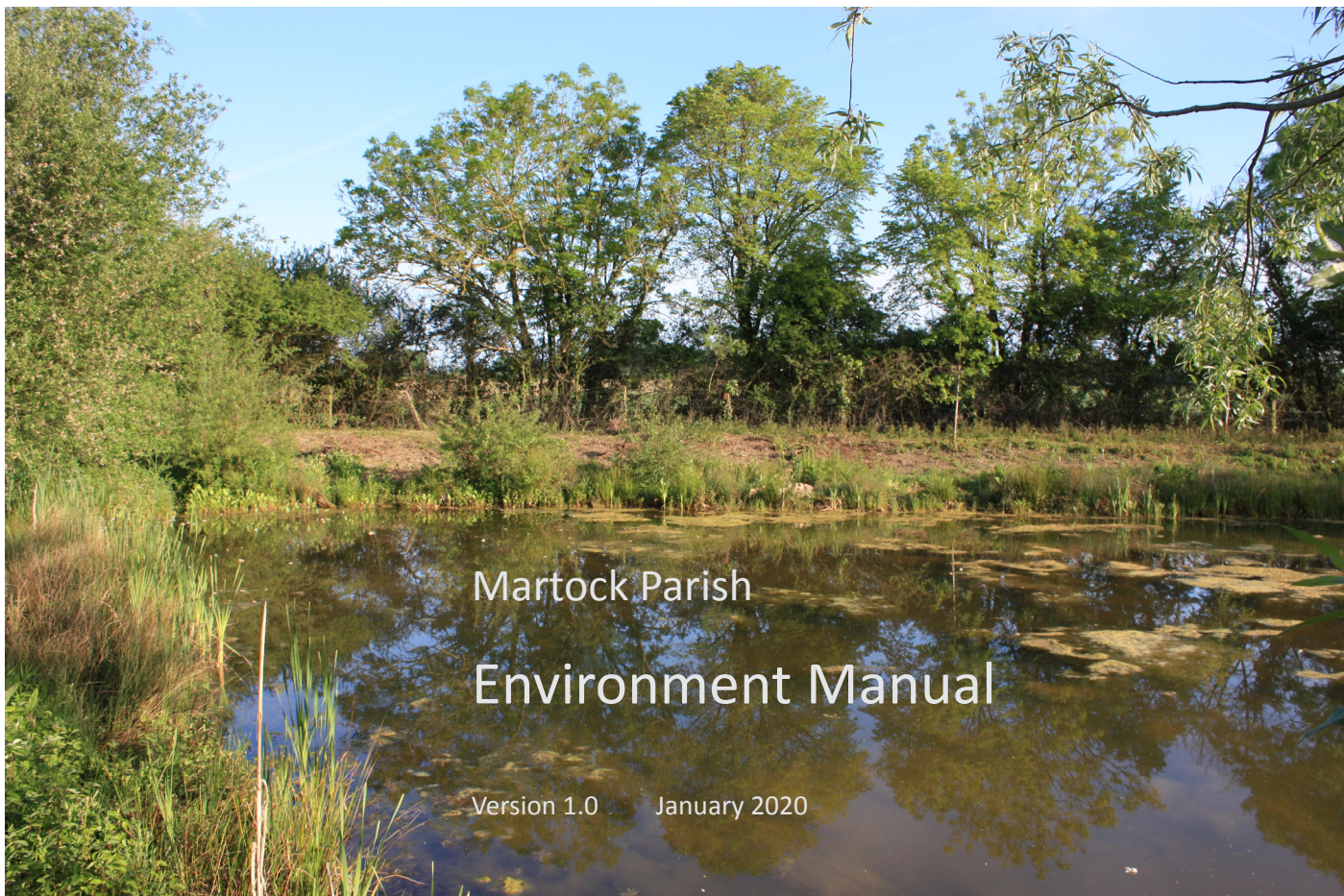


# Martock Environment Manual

Version 1.0 January 2020



Cartgate Nature Area

Cover. Pyramidal Orchid,  
Cartgate Nature Area

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# 1 Introduction

## The purpose of this Manual

This Manual is designed to serve two purposes. Firstly it is a Parish environmental record and secondly it is a manual to guide sound and sensitive planning within the Parish.

### 1 A Parish Environmental Record

The Manual outlines the main areas of biodiversity within the Parish using Phase 1 Habitat descriptors<sup>1</sup> of cultivated land, wetland, woodland grassland and borders. These are mapped and individual habitats are described. Data are recorded in a geographical information database which will eventually be available online<sup>2</sup>.

This is inevitably an ongoing activity. The more significant habitats only are included in this version, particularly those close to the built area. Future work will not only identify habitats in more detail but it is the intention also to include those, such as historic hedges, that have suffered, and are suffering, erosion.

Secondly, the Manual will outline historically significant sites and structures, such as ridge and furrow fields, that impact on the wider environment. These data complement those kept by Historic England (listed buildings), the Martock Conservation Area Appraisal and the Somerset Historic Environment Record.

Thirdly, the Manual describes the significant landscape features around the village and the important views around the Parish and particularly, across the village itself.

### 2 A Parish Environmental Planning Guide

The manual will provide a detailed evidence source to inform the environmental policies of the Martock Parish Neighbourhood Plan. These policies are concerned with the following issues:

- Maintaining and enhancing biodiversity generally.
- The conservation of important views and landscapes and around the village;
- The conservation of significant areas of biodiversity around the Parish;
- Preserving significant trees around the Parish;

The guide will provide guidance for planners, Parish councillors and developers on how to ensure that compromising the environment by any development is minimised and how developments wherever possible, might achieve a net gain in biodiversity.

## A Note on this Version 1.0 January 2020

This is the first operational version of the Environment Manual and provides information and data to support the submission version of the Martock Neighbourhood Plan of January 2020. This requires information on the biodiversity nodes and corridors in the vicinity of the village and also data on landscapes and views around the village. Research is continuing to develop the Manual to give it a broader Parish-wide relevance which will include data on the historical environment of the wider Parish and to integrate it with wider environmental audits in South Somerset District and Somerset County.

# 2

## The Policy Environment

### National policy

Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework<sup>1</sup> is concerned with conserving and enhancing the natural environment. More specifically it is concerned with protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils as well as recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

Neighbourhood plans are required to identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife rich habitats and wider ecological networks including locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity, wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them. This guide seeks to provide details of the local habitats and networks backed up by survey evidence.

<sup>1</sup> The National Planning Policy Framework, February 2019  
<http://www.martockplan.org.uk/Documents/Policy/NPPF%20Feb2019.pdf>

### The DEFRA Biodiversity Metric

The DEFRA Biodiversity Metric represents a mechanism for quantifying and assessing changes in biodiversity value brought about by a change in land management. It is intended that such a metric will be trialled within the parish to obtain an objective assessment of the impact of any such change.

More about the DEFRA Biodiversity metric here.

#### From the national Planning Policy Framework (Feb 2109)

Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- a. protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
- b. recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;
- c. maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;
- d. minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;
- e. preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and
- f. remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.

### Local policy

Local policy to provoke biodiversity is set out in the South Somerset Local Plan<sup>2</sup>, specifically policy EQ4

#### From Policy EQ4 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028)

All proposals for development, including those which would affect sites of regional and local biodiversity, nationally and internationally protected sites and sites of geological interest, will:

- Protect the biodiversity value of land and buildings and minimise fragmentation of
- habitats and promote coherent ecological networks;
- Maximise opportunities for restoration, enhancement and connection of natural habitats;
- Incorporate beneficial biodiversity conservation features where appropriate;
- Protect and assist recovery of identified priority species; and
- Ensure that Habitat Features, Priority Habitats and Geological Features that are used by bats and other wildlife are protected and that the design including proposals for lighting does not cause severance or is a barrier to movement.

<sup>2</sup> South Somerset Local Plan 2006-28. Adopted March 2015.

<http://martockplan.org.uk/Documents/Policy/SSDC%20Local%20Plan.pdf>

<sup>1</sup> “Wild Somerset” can be downloaded from [www.somerset.gov.uk/EasySiteWeb/GatewayLink.aspx?allid=43032](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/EasySiteWeb/GatewayLink.aspx?allid=43032)

The overall aim of the plan can be summarised as implementing the objectives of the Somerset biodiversity strategy 2008- 2018 ‘Wild Somerset’<sup>1</sup>. In Martock, this means conserving biodiversity through the neighbourhood development plan. This will be done in a number of ways:

- By identifying existing important areas of biodiversity and ensuring that they are conserved.
- By ensuring important areas of biodiversity remain linked by corridors and that new areas of development maintain or improve these areas and corridors.
- By conserving important landscapes and views
- We will seek to implement a net gain approach to development using the DEFRA biodiversity metric.

## Designated Areas of Conservation

Martock Parish does not have any special areas of conservation or scientific interest designated and national and county level. But straddling, as it does, the low Yeovil Scarplands and the Somerset Moors it has a biodiversity network which is particularly varied and rich. This guide describes this network and identifies its more important components. This description is backed by ongoing local survey work.

South Somerset, following a major administrative reorganisation and a recent change of overall political leadership, is embarking on a revision of its environmental policies and practices. It is intended that parts of the Parish that have a particularly rich biodiversity should be recognised as such within the county and thereby gain some degree of protection.

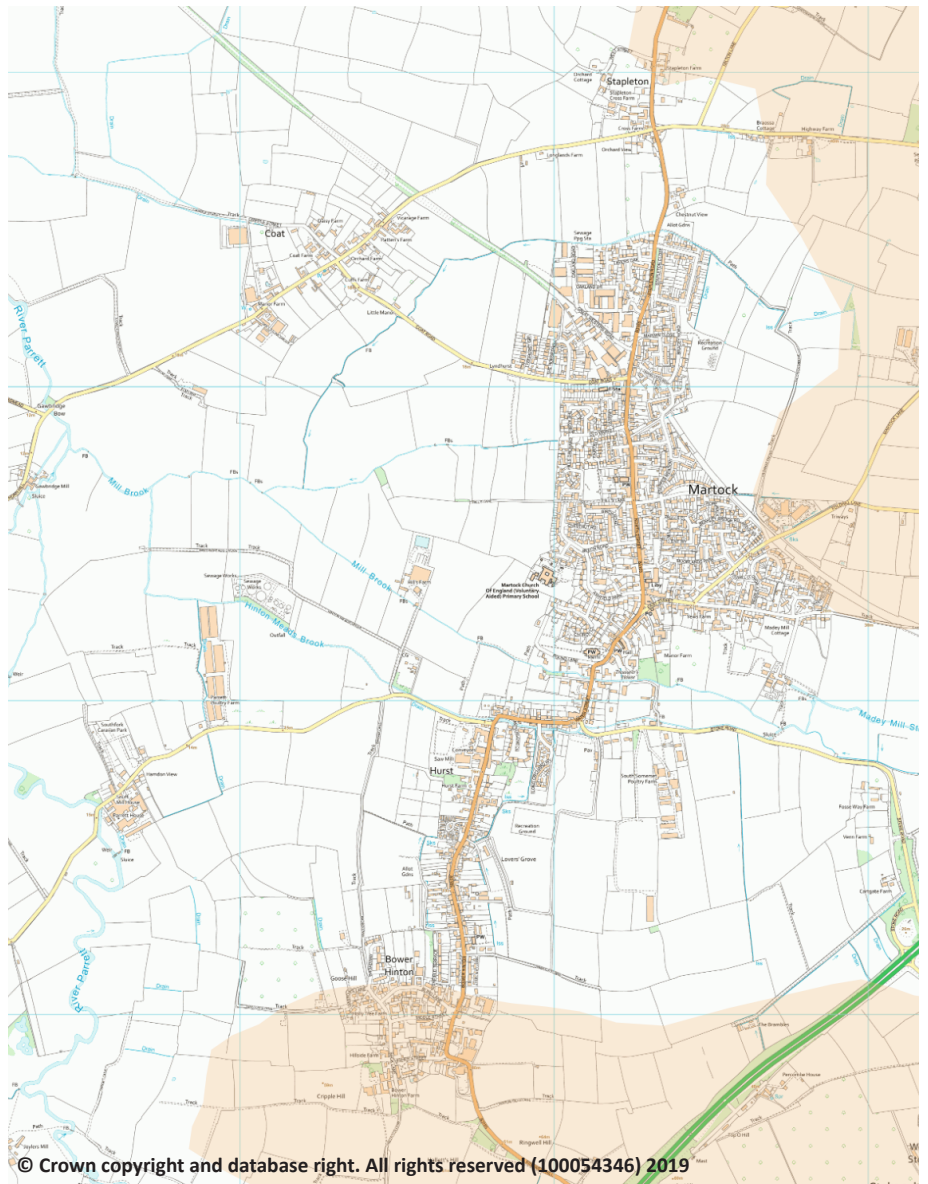
# 3

## The Martock Landscape

**An Overview** The map below shows the position of Martock at the junction of higher land to the east and the low-lying valley of the River Parrett to the west.

The area to the north east of the village is characterised by low rolling hills up to 30m or so, the southern end of a large area known as the Yeovil sands where mixed arable and grassland came to dominate from the fourteenth century onwards. To the south these rolling hills give way to the dominant Ham Hill escarpment at 100m. Below Ham Hill to the west are the hills around Bower Hinton around the south of the village reaching around 50m high, the highest point of the Parish.

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Martock showing land above 30m

Between these areas of higher ground is the valley drained by Hurst Brook and Madey Mill stream which flow to the west into the River Parrett which forms the western boundary of the Parish. The Parrett flows north west and the land becomes almost level at a height of around 10m. This flat land is the southern extent of the Somerset Levels and Moors, once marsh and now drained by a network of artificial rhynes.

The map shows the position of Martock in the valley of the two watercourses, Hurst Brook and Madey Mill Stream. The old village is on an area of slightly raised land on the north bank. The older built area is largely confined to this valley bottom where the soil has always been good quality and drained well. The houses are typically close together, often terraced, with long gardens behind. Further out were small enclosed fields for small livestock and orchards.

The land around Martock in the past was much richer in trees than it is today. The change was partly due to changes in farming practices with the advent of machinery. Somerset has traditionally been known for dairy farming mainly because of the heavy clay soils which meant grass could be managed more easily than arable land. It has also been known for apples, particularly cider production. Flooding too, in the past, limited the kinds of farming possible. Livestock farming tended to require small fields with well developed hedges and these became dotted with mature trees, most particularly elm, which was frequently used rather than oak for structural elements of the houses.



The village centre in the 1950s showing a landscape of small fields rich in hedgerow trees, particularly elm.

This aerial photograph of the land downstream, west of Martock, taken in the 1950s, shows the dominating elm-rich hedges. This changed in the seventies when Dutch Elm disease destroyed all the mature elms leaving only their rootstock and suckers, and also as more farmers turned to arable farming with the advent of more powerful machinery.

## The Martock Peripheral Landscape Study

Peripheral Landscape Studies were carried out early this century under the auspices of the South Somerset Local Development Framework to inform the emerging South Somerset development Plan for the period 2006-26. The purpose of the studies was to throw light on the issue of how to ensure that development outside the main centres in Somerset could take place without undermining the essential rural character of the area.

The Martock Peripheral Landscape study can be downloaded from [here](#)

The reports mapped the areas around the villages identifying areas of visual sensitivity and also, the other side of the coin, areas where development might take place that would involve minimum harm to the landscape.

The map below, adapted from the Landscape Study, shows the most visually sensitive areas of landscape around the village as well as the line of visual containment, the line of the horizon looking out from the village. The important conclusions from this map is that further development in the village should be restricted to areas adjacent to the current built area where it does

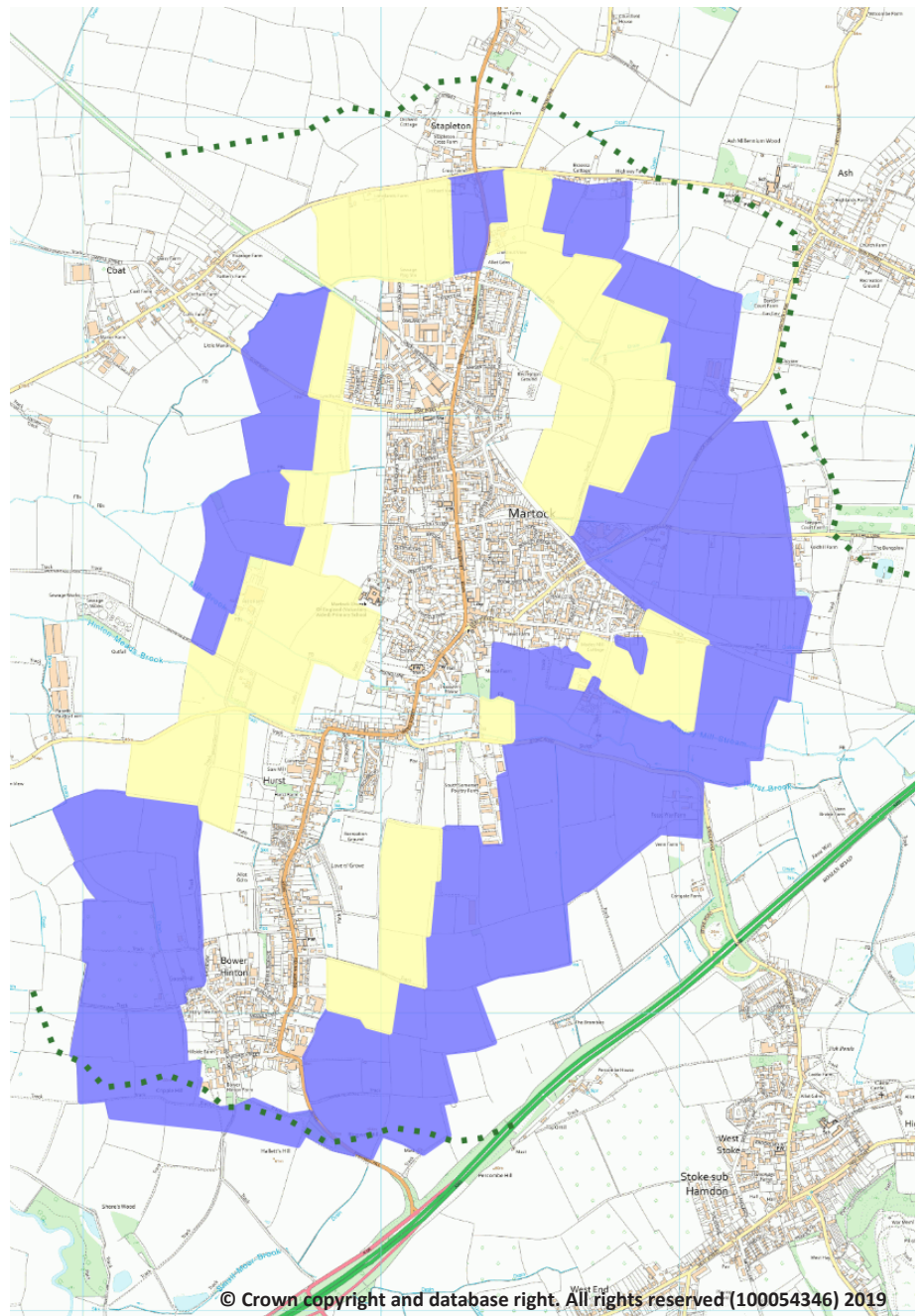
# Map showing landscape visual sensitivity.

From the Martock Peripheral Landscape Study

## Legend

Landscape visual sensitivity

- High sensitivity
- Moderate sensitivity
- Line of visual containment



not intrude on this very visible higher land around the village and, particularly, should not intrude on the skyline as viewed from within or across the village.

# 4

## Martock Biodiversity

**Overview** Local policy to support and enhance biodiversity is set out in the South Somerset Local Plan. The overall aim of local planning policy on the environment is set out in the Somerset Biodiversity Strategy 2008- 2018 'Wild Somerset'. In Martock, this means conserving biodiversity through the Neighbourhood Plan. This will be done in a number of ways:

- By identifying existing important areas of biodiversity with a view to working with landowners to ensure their conservation.
- By ensuring important areas of biodiversity remain linked by corridors
- By ensuring that new areas of development maintain or improve these areas and corridors.
- By conserving important landscapes and views
- By seeking to implement a net biodiversity gain approach to development using the DEFRA biodiversity metric.

The Parish can be conveniently divided into five areas that are distinct from each other in both landscape and biodiversity. These areas are shown on the map below.

### **Area 1. The edge of the Somerset Moors north-west of the village of Coat**

This is an area of low-lying mainly level farmland below about 12m above mean sea level rising gently towards the north and east. In the past much of it has been wetland but is now largely drained and contains substantial areas of semi-improved grassland and semi-natural woodland and mature hedges. It contains an area of common land with wet fencing and rhynes. It is bisected by a partially reclaimed disused railway line which for most of its course is an embankment some 2 to 3m high. There is some standing water, particularly to the north, and also a network of drainage rhynes and much of the west boundary is the River Parrett. The area includes a small rich nature reserve (Town Tree Farm) with wetland features. There are areas of archaeological significance including ridge and furrow cultivation

### **Area 2. Foldhill.**

This is a rolling gentle low hill to the north east of the village rising to about 40m. It is mainly arable cultivated land and improved grassland. The disused railway line defines its southern limit. The area is crossed by native species-rich hedges with the occasional tree. Some of the farms still have their farm pond and there are areas of wetland, some now drained to incorporate surface water in ponds. In the south-east corner is a small nature area created when the A303 was widened into a dual carriageway in the 1980s. It is a small mixed area containing a pond, a length of former railway embankment and some small areas of scrub and woodland. It is owned by Highways England and managed by the village.

### **Area 3. The Hurst Vale plain downstream of the village**

This is an area of relatively flat land mainly between the two roads from the village towards the Parrett, crossing at it at Gawbridge in the north and Parrett

**1** Low lying farmland rising gently to the north and east. Substantial semi-improved grassland. Semi natural woodland. Mature hedgerows. Registered Common. Rhynes, brook, river and much standing water, especially at the local nature reserve. Important archaeology, including ridge and furrow.

**2** Low hills, clay loam, mainly arable and improved grassland. Many old species rich hedgerows with trees, some double enclosing a track with drainage ditches. Once contained many farm ponds, some surviving with associated patches of wetland. Drained by rhynes and some small ponds.

Disused railway line. Important corridor.

Rivers and brooks. Important corridors right across the parish through the village centre.

River Parrett. Important corridor.

**3** Low lying level land drained by a network of rhynes. Once grassland but now mainly arable with larger fields. Ancient but now mainly inter-rupetd hedgerows. Some small spinneys.

**4** Low lying almost level river valley flooding regularly. Drained by two linked streams, one and old mill race. Much Improved grassland, mature hedgerows and some modern orchards. Stand alone trees once part of hedges, many willow.

**5** Low hills upto 60m, arable and improved grassland, some ridge and furrow. Mature hedgerows. Stand-alone trees, some copses and a modern plantation. Managed shooting covers. Mature hedgerows, some enclosing old tracks. Several large pools. rhynes and the river Parrett.

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## Martock Biodiversity.

Map showing five different areas around the village and the two important corridors that bisect the parish, the disused railway line and the Hurst Brook valley.

Works in the south. It is largely cultivated arable land with some improved grassland. It is drained by the two streams, Hinton Meads Brook (a continuation of Hurst Brook) and Mill Brook, the millstream from Madey Mill, together with a network of associated rhynes and on its western edge all of which flow into the River Parrett. The fields are typically marked by interrupted hedges, sometimes with associated ditches, interspersed with a few trees.

#### **Area 4. The Hurst Vale plain upstream from the village**

The Martock Village rainfall catchment area consists of the low hills to the east of this area and west of Yeovil. Water drains into this area which is a floodplain drained by two water courses, Hurst Brook and Madey Millstream. There is some arable cultivated land but most is still improved grassland. This area was once rich in orchards and remnants still exist and new orchards have recently been replanted. Hedges tend to be interrupted by mature trees. There are also patches of scattered scrub, particularly associated with the disused railway line along the north side of this area. The east of this area is formed by the A303 with its associated new woodland edges.

#### **Area 5. The south of the Parish**

This is an area largely of agricultural land and rises to some 60m above mean sea level south of the village. It still has some remnants of ancient tree covering and this has been enhanced with patches of new plantation, including an orchard. Many of the old hedges are still continuous, species rich and contain many mature trees. The western edge of this area is marked by the River Parrett which in this section is richly tree-lined. An old drove follows the river, tree-lined and with ditches either side. Three substantial modern ponds, now species rich, have been constructed in an area of former wetland or heavy clay.

### **Habitat mapping**

A habitat mapping program has been initiated. This uses the broad Phase 1 criteria listed in the table below. This is a work in progress and the maps and data below show the areas that have been mapped by May 2019. This exercise will shortly go online which will give more immediate access to the habitat data, including photographs.

For this exercise, each of the five distinct areas around the village has been covered by a map as shown below (two maps for area 1).

Within each mapped area, each habitat described has been given a reference number made up of two letters representing the broad phase 1 category followed by a reference number beginning with the area number described above.

Data from each habitat recorded are shown described in the tables following the maps (and will eventually be available online simply by clicking the habitat).

Table 1 JNCC Phase 1 habitats recorded in the Parish

Habitat category	JNCC Phase1 Handbook category	Phase 1 Letter code
Woodland and scrub	Broadleaf woodland	BW
Wo*	Conifer woodland	CW
	Mixed woodland	MW
	Plantation (broadleaf, conifer etc)	PBW (PCW etc)
	Continuous scrub	DS
	Scattered scrub	SS
	Parkland/scattered trees broadleaf	SBW
Grassland	Unimproved grassland	NG
Gr*	Semi-improved grassland	SNG
	Marshy grassland	MG
	Improved grassland	I
Open water	Standing water mesotrophic	SWM
Wa*	Running water mesotrophic	RWM
Cultivated	Arable	A
Ct*	Amenity grassland	AM
Boundaries	Hedges species rich intact	RH
Bd*	Hedges with trees species rich	RHT
	Double hedge with trees/track/ditches	DHRT**
	Dry ditch	DD
	Earth Bank	EB
	Wall	W

\* Abbreviations used in the maps below

\*\* Not on JNCC list but added here as it is a common element in the local environment and a rich combination of several habitats

### Habitat data tables

The tables following the maps below provided data on all the habitats shown on the maps. The number before the decimal point refers to the area map on which the habitat can be found.

The data are categorised according to JNCC Phase 1 classes shown in Table 1 above. The abbreviations in column 1 of the table are as follows

Bd Boundaries (mainly hedges)

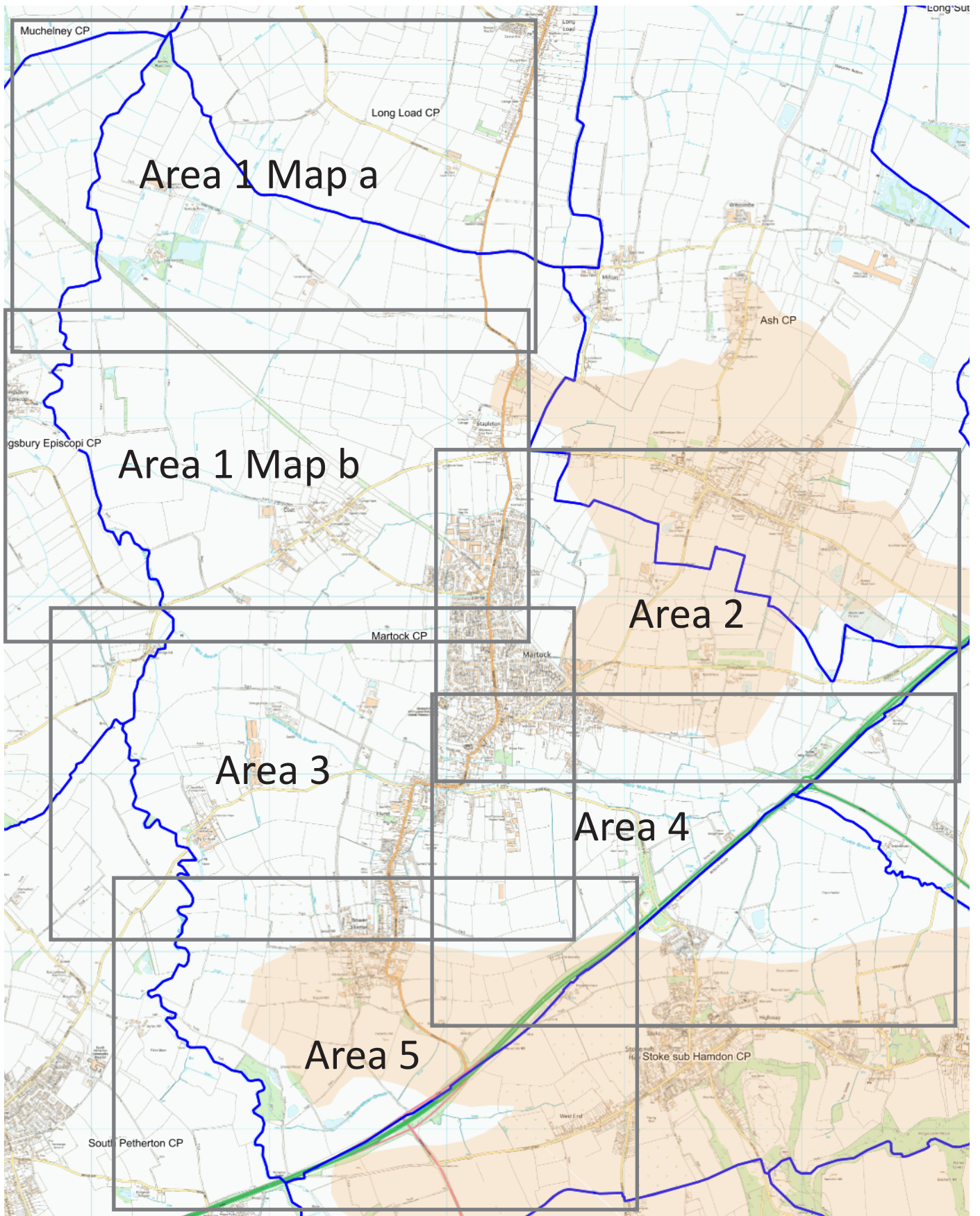
Ct Cultivated

Gr Grassland

Wa Open Water

Wo Woodland

These data are being continually updated and will be made available online.



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Habitat mapping

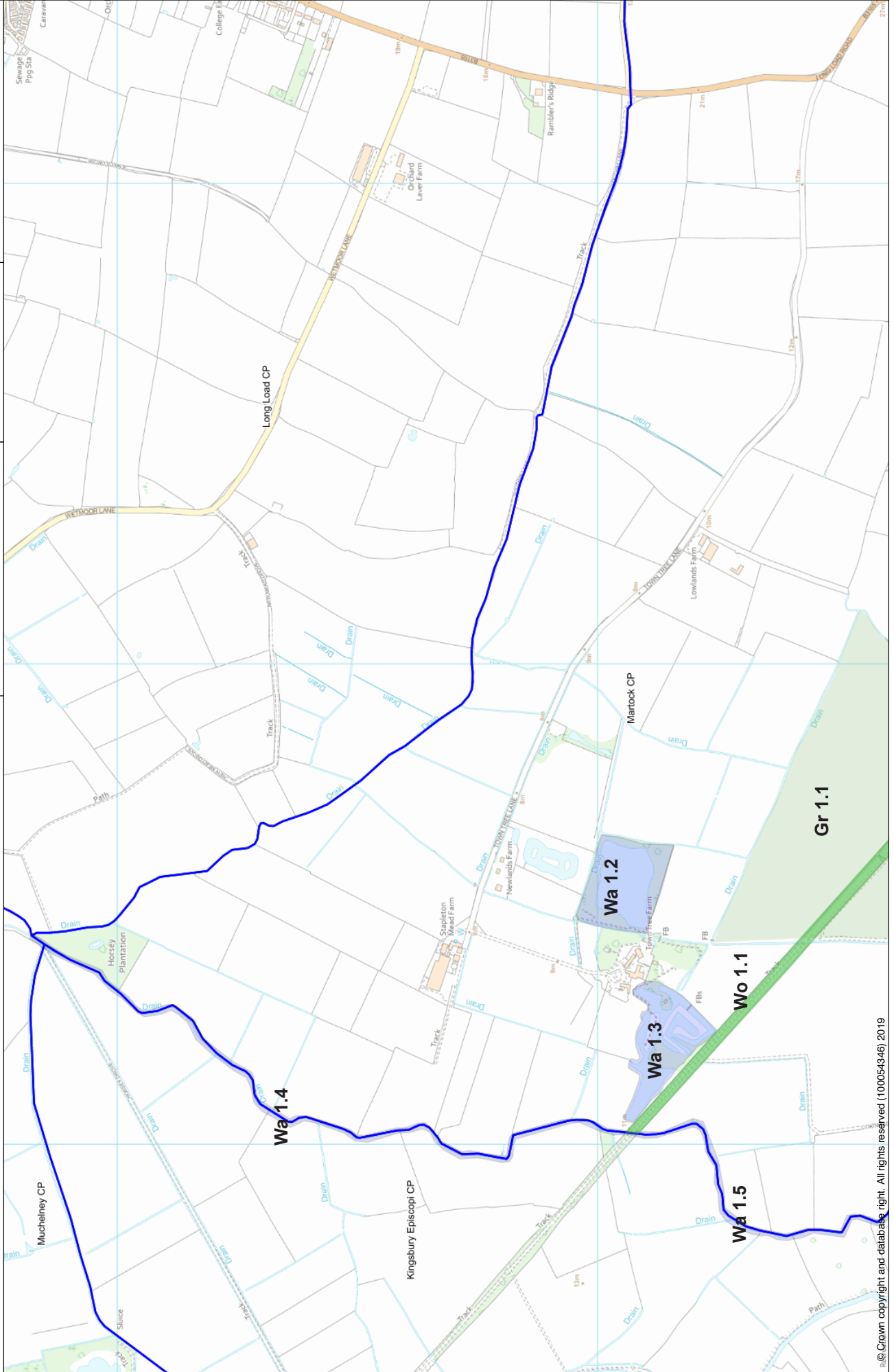
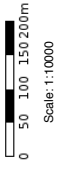
Summary map of the parish showing the extent of the six habitat maps below

Martock CP

Author:

Date: 07/06/2019

Martock Parish Natural Environment habitat survey  
Area 1, Map a



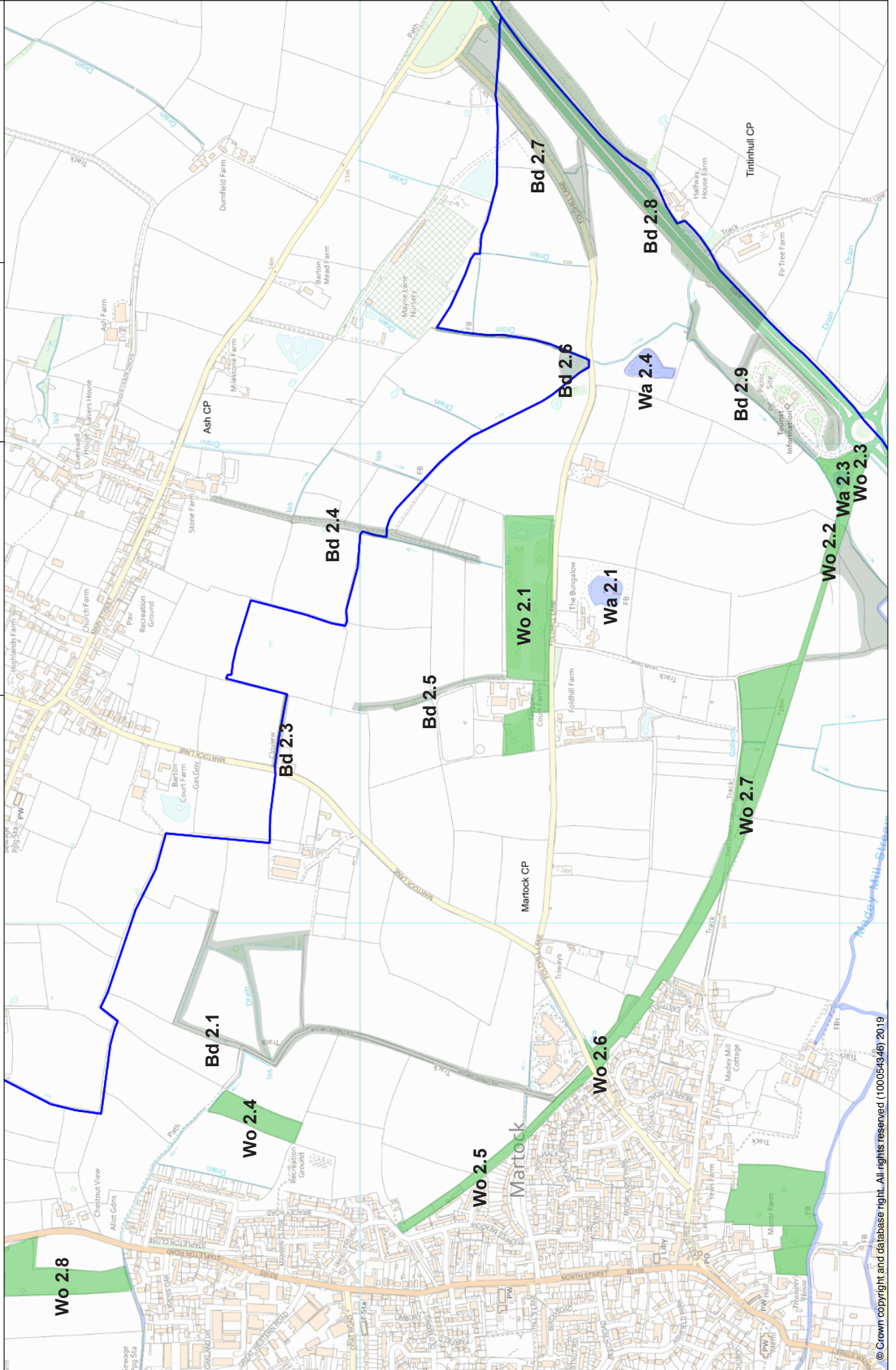
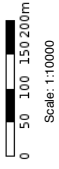


**Martock Parish Natural Environment habitat survey  
Area 2**

Martock CP

**Author:**

**Date:** 21/05/2019

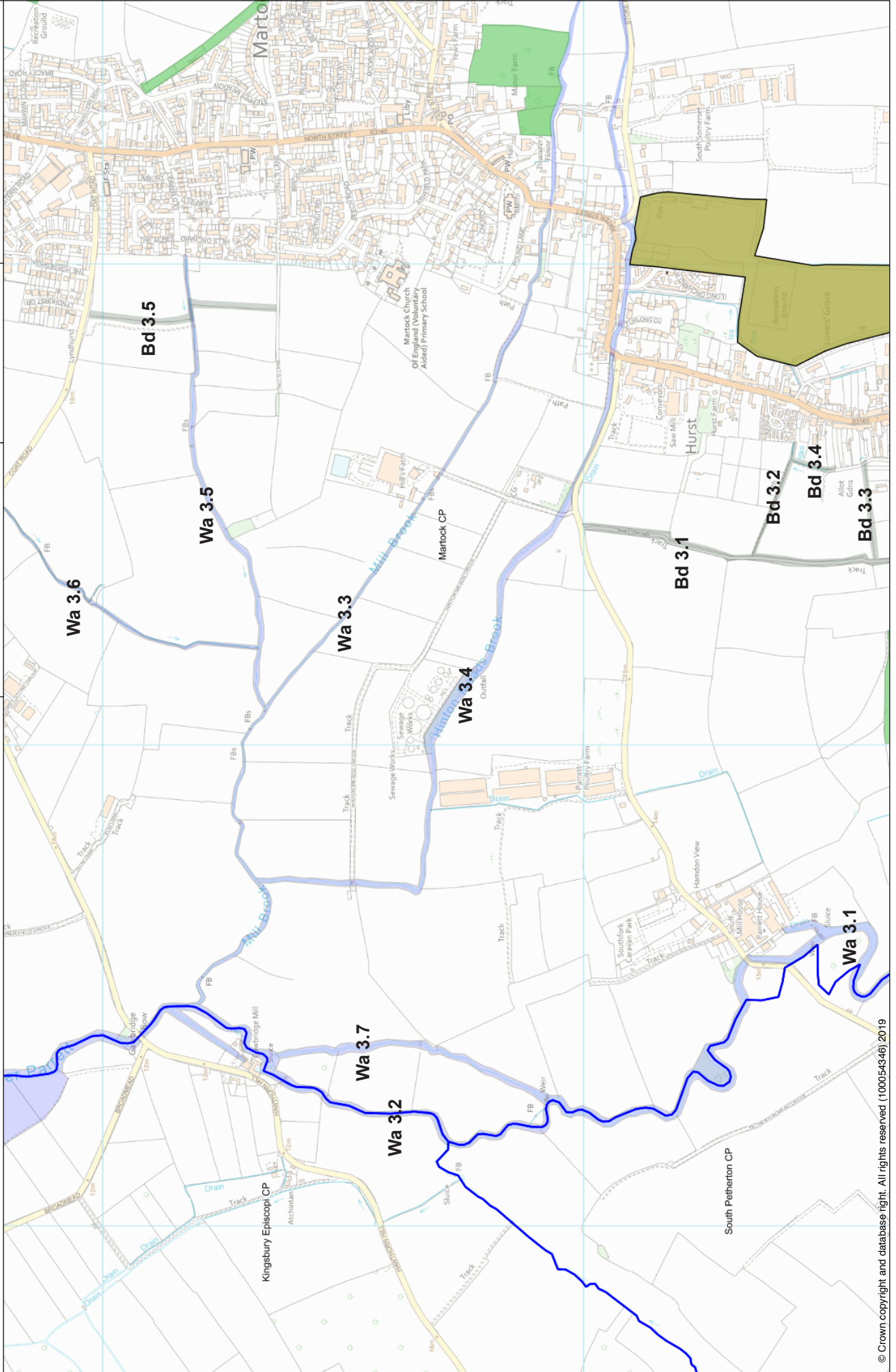
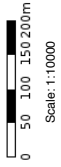


**Martock Parish Natural Environment habitat survey**  
**Area 3**

Martock CP

Author:

Date: 04/06/2019

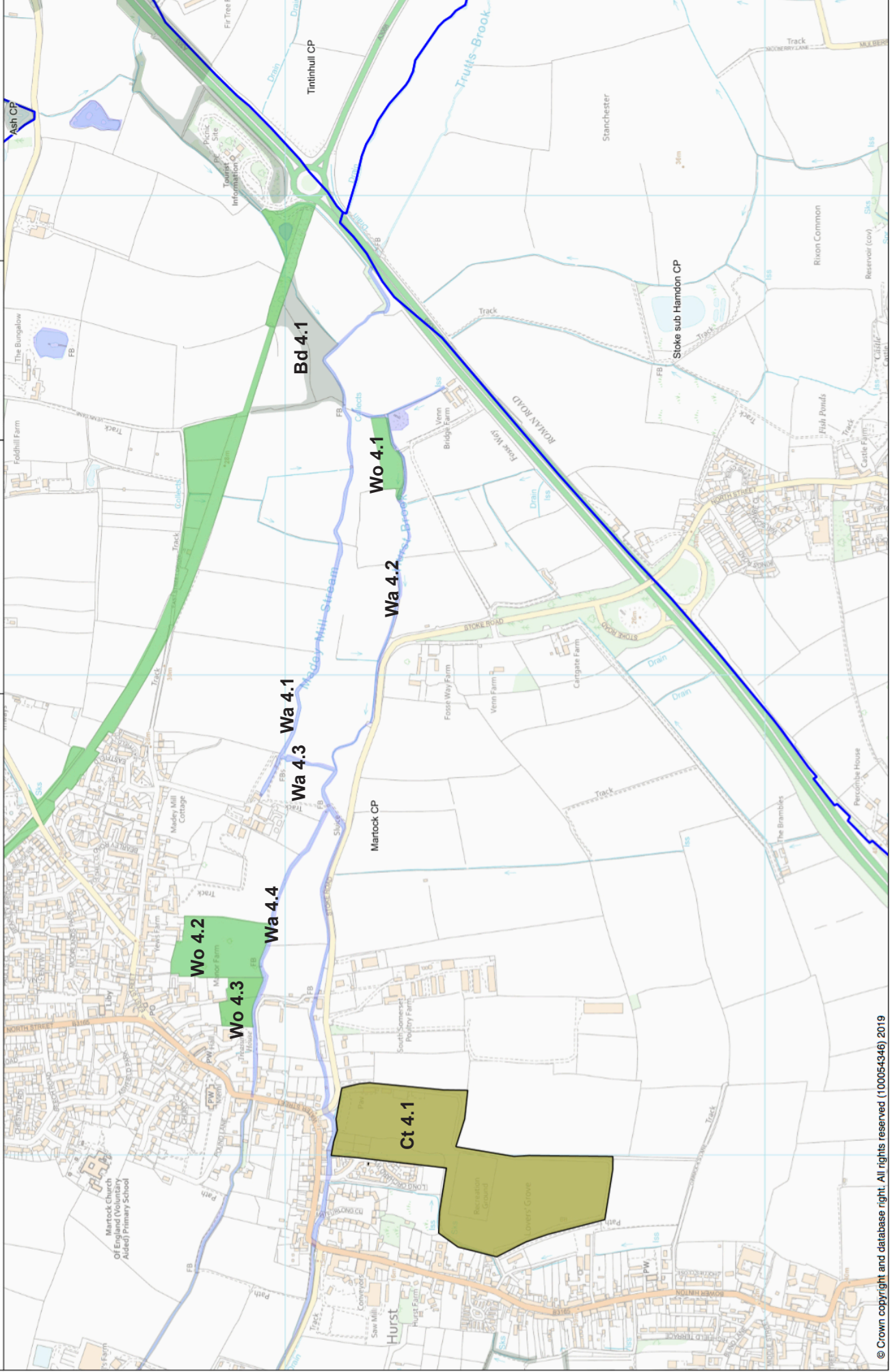


**Martock Parish Natural Environment habitat survey**  
**Area 4**

Martock CP

**Author:**

**Date:** 21/05/2019

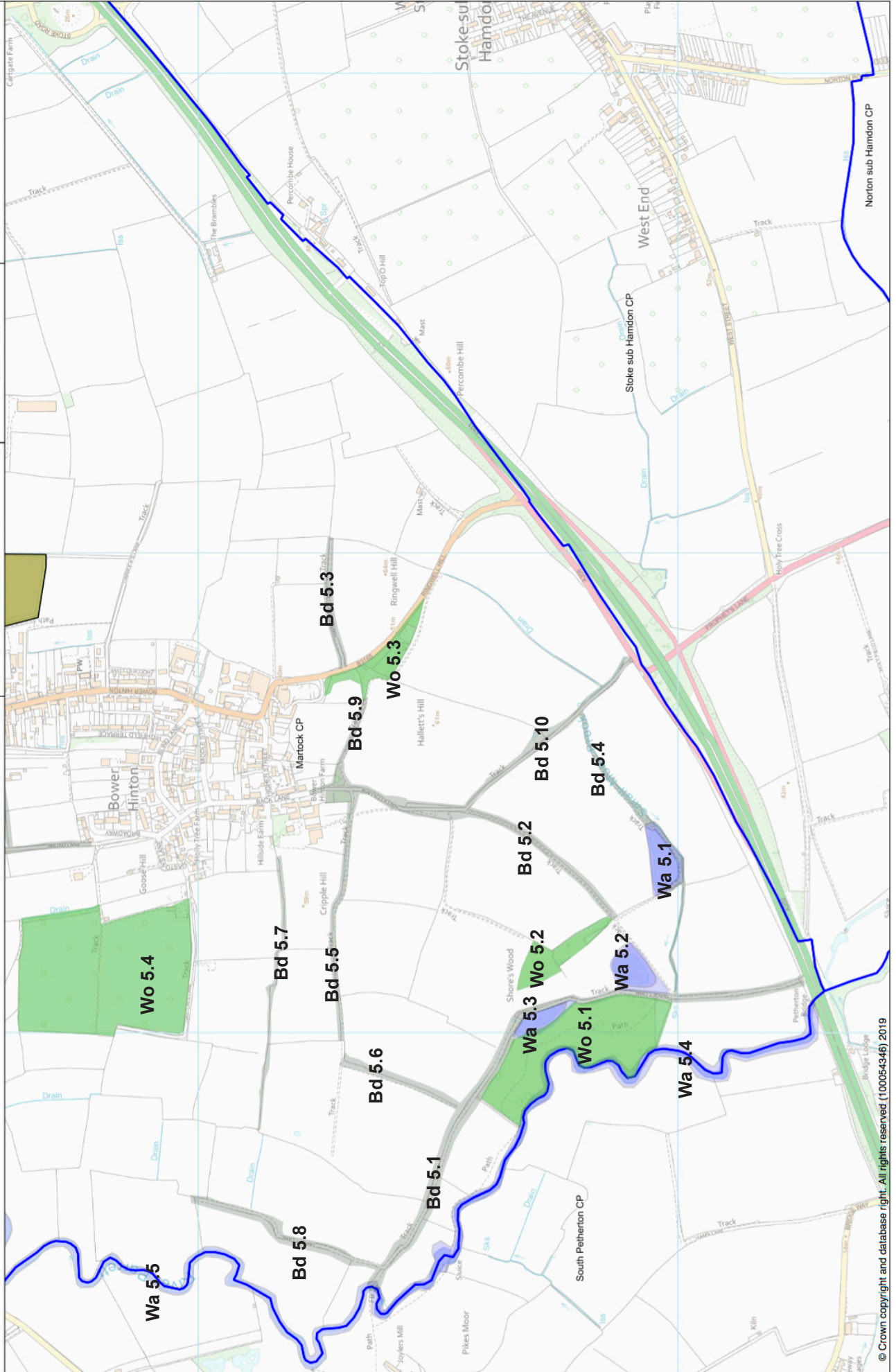
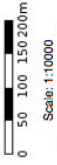


**Martock Parish Natural Environment habitat survey**  
**Area 5**

Martock CP

Author:

Date: 21/05/2019



Data tables. The tables below show data of all the habitats noted on the maps

Table 2 Boundaries habitats

Reference	Name	Description	Location	Class	Additional_informatio
Bd 2.1	Field boundaries	Hedges and copses	East of Bracey Road	RHT	
Bd 2.3	Track	Track off Martock Lane -Parish boundary	East of martock lane	RHT	
Bd 2.4	Track	Track hedge and ditch south of Ash to Foldhill		RHT	Mainly outside the parish
Bd 2.5		Old boundary and track	Behind Taeppe Court Farm	RHT	
Bd 2.6	Hedgerow	Hedge and ditch with small ponds	North of Foldhill	RHT	Includes ponds and contiguous scrub at the south end near road
Bd 2.7	Foldhill Road	Roadsides near Tintinhull Forts	West of Tintinhull Forts	DRHT	Includes contiguous scrub
Bd 2.8	A303	A303 verges	North East of Cartgate	DRHT	
Bd 2.9	Cartgate	Western boundary hedge and ditch	Cartgate	RHT	Two ditches, one a stream. Edge of an amenity area
Bd 3.1	Broad lane	Old drove, tree lined with ditches both sides	West of Hurst	DRHT	
Bd 3.2		Field boundary with trees	Between Hurst Park and Broad Lane	RHT	Public footpath
Bd 3.3		Hedge with trees and ditch	Between Allotments and Broad Lane west of Bower Hinton	RHT	Public Footpath (Parrett Way)
Bd 3.4		Trees and undergrowth varying width	Garden border west of Hurst	RHT	
Bd 3.5		Hedgerow	South of Coat Road	DHT	
Bd 4.1	South of cartgate	Mixed hedge, scrub and grass area south of Cartgate	Adjacent cartgate	RHT RWM SNG	Unused small field and high hedgerowsStream on south west side flows into Madey Millstream
Bd 4.2	Gildings Drove	Track. Two hedges and ditches	East of Bracey Rod	DRHT	
Bd 5.1	Target Lane	Old track bounded by mature hedges and trees and ditches	Petheron Bridge to Bulsom Bridge	DRHT	Ancient RoW, double ditched track with overgrown hedges
Bd 5.2	Halletts Lane	Farm track with mature hedges and many trees	Running south from Bower Hinton over Halletts Hill	DRHT	Old RoW, track with two hedges now many trees
Bd 5.3	Hinton Field Lane	Disused old farm track deeply carved into Ringwell hillside	Ringwell Hill	DRHT	Possibly old road. Old field track, two hedges. Cut deeply out of the country by water. Steep banks. mature hedges
Bd 5.4	Small Moor Brook	RHT RMW. Species rich hedge, track, trees and brook	South of Ringwell Hill	RHT RMW	Farm track with overgrown hedge and natural (possibly) drainage ditch
Bd 5.5	Cripple Hill track	RoW and farm track	North of Cripple Hill	RHT	Single hedge with trees and track to south
Bd 5.6		Hedge with track to west	West of Cripple Hill	RHT	
Bd 5.7		Hedgerow with trees	West of Bower Hinton	RHT	
Bd 5.8		RoW and Hedgerow	North of Bulsom Bridge	RHT	Old RoW with track, hedge and ditch. Adjacent to Ridge and Furrow Field

Bd 5.9		Track and hedge	South of Bower Hinton	RHT	RoW and old boundary hedge and ditch
Bd 5.10		Old farm track and hedge	South of Halletts Hill	RHT	

**Table 3 Cultivated habitats**

Reference	Name	Description	Location	Class	Additional information
Ct 4.1	Recreation Ground	Recreation ground with pitches, pavilions and a play area	South of Water Street	AM	

**Table 4 Grassland habitats**

Reference	Name	Location	Description	Class	Additional information
Gr 1.1	Coathay Common	West of Coat	Common grassland	NG and SNG	Common land currently used by only a few commoners. Grass has been improved through grazing but some parts retain the old range of grasses and flowering plants

**Table 5 Open water habitats**

Reference	Name	Location	Description	Class	Additional information
Wa 1.1	River Parrett	Gawbridge to Oxbore	River	RWM	
Wa 1.2	Town Tree Reserve Lake	Town Tree Reserve	Lake and wetland	SWM	
Wa 1.3	Town Tree Farm Wetland Area	Town Tree Reserve	Mix of Open Water and wetland	SWM	Part of Town Tree Nature Area
Wa 1.4	Rhyne	Horsey Plantation to old railway	Rhyne	RWM	Part of a newnetwork of drainage ditches
Wa 1.5	Rhyne	Old railway to Oxbore	Rhyne	RWM	Part of a newnetwork of drainage ditches
Wa 2.1	Pond	Foldhill Farm	Farm pond	SWM	
Wa 2.2	Pond	South Foldhill Lane	Pond and damp area	SWM	
Wa 2.3	Cartgate nature area	Cartgate	Pond	SWM	Part of Cartgate nature area. Flood protection area retention pond
Wa 2.4	Pond	North of cartgate	One of a number of small ponds in a wet area	SWM	
Wa 3.1	River Parrett	Btween Bulsom Bridge and Parrett Works	River	RWM	
Wa 3.2	River Parrett	Parrett Works to Gawbridge	River	RWM	
Wa 3.3	MillBrook	West of Martock	Millstream	RWM	
Wa 3.4	Hinton Meads Brook	Martock to Parrett	Brook. Continuation of Hurst Brook downstream of the village	RWM	

Wa 3.5	Cobdens Rhyne	Connects Hills Orchard area with Mill Brook	Rhyne	RWM	
Wa 3.6	Furbers Rhyne	Drains Stapleton to Mill Brook	Rhyne	RWM	
Wa 3.7	Gawbridge Mill-stream	Upstream of Gawbridge Mill	Millstream from a weir powering Gawbridge mill	RWM	
Wa 4.1	Madey Mill Stream	East of madey Mill	Millstream from Hurst Brook feeding the old Madey Mill	RWM	
Wa 4.2	Hurst Brook	East of Martock	Stream	RWM	Hurst Brook from sources to Hurst Bow Bridge including springs and some associated wetland
Wa 4.3	Madey Mill overflow	East of Madey Mill	Overflow from mill race to Hurst brook	RWM	Overflow from Madey Mill race above mill
Wa 4.4	Madey Mill Stream	Downstream of Mill	Madey Mill stream from Mill to Water street	RWM	
Wa 5.1	Garlic Lake	South of Hallett's Hill	Artificial irrigation and storage pond	SWM	Initially created in 1980s to support the A303 construction
Wa 5.2	Oaky Field Lake	South of Hallett's Hill	Artificial irrigation pond	SWM	
Wa 5.3	River Leaze Lake	South of Ringwell Hill	Irrigation Pond and surrounding marsh area	SWM	Created from marshland ca 1990
Wa 5.4	River Parrett	Upstream from Bulsom Bridge	River	RMW	Main River and Parish Boundary
Wa 5.5	River Parrett	Petherton Bridge to Bulsom Bridge	River	RWM	Parish Boundary

**Table 6 Woodland habitats**

Reference	Name	Location	Description	Class of-woodland	Additional information
Wo 1.1	Old railway line	Martock to river Parrett	Mainly embankment, scrub and trees	DS	Much now cultivated or improved
Wo 2.1	Taepper Court farm	Foldhill Lane		PBW	
Wo 2.2	Cartgate Nature area	Cartgate	Mixed meadow and scrub	SS	Mainly former railway line, low embankment
Wo 2.3	Cartgate nature area	Cartgate	Wooded part of nature area	BW	
Wo 2.4	Old orchard	East of Bracey Road	Old orchard	PBW	Old orchard surrounded by hedges
Wo 2.5	Old Railway	Steppes Meadow to Bearley Bridge	dismantled railway	SS	
Wo 2.6	Old Railway	East of Foldhill Lane	Edge of old railway now scrub and copse and ponds	DS	
Wo 2.7	Old railway	Bearley Bridge to Cartgate	Old railway now mixed discontinuous scrub	SS	Some parts now cultivated. No longer continuous. Important corridor gradually being eroded. Includes site of former signal box and cottage
Wo 2.8	Orchard	South of Stapleton	Old orchard with some new planting	PBW	Remnants

Wo 4.1	Woodland	Adjacent Hurst brook	Orchard?	PBW	
Wo 4.2	Yews Farm orchard	South of east St	Orchard	PBW	
Wo 4.3	Manor Farm Copse	South of Manor farm	Young woodland and old orchard	PBW	Young woodland on the site of old orchards containing ponds
Wo 5.1	Target Wood	West of target Lane track	Recent plantation in Parrett flood plain. Mixed broadleaf, damp tolerant	PBW	
Wo 5.2	Shores wood	Base of Halletts Hill	Remnant of old broadleaf woodland with ditch through the middle	BW	
Wo 5.3	Ringwell Hill copse	Ringwell Hill	Recent mixed copse surrounding village water storage tank	PBW	
Wo 5.4	Gastons Lane orchard	West of Bower Hinton	Modern orchard bounded with mature trees as windbreaks (mainly poplar)	PBW	

# 8

## Views of the Parish

### Parish views and landscapes

National planning policy recognises the conservation and enhancement of natural landscapes by including it specifically in one of the six strategic policies. The process of developing the aims and objectives for the Martock Parish Neighbourhood Plan confirmed that parishioners of Martock Parish wish to retain and protect the rural character of the area.

In response to the community's call to value and protect the rurality of the area the neighbourhood plan identified features that contributed to essential character of the landscape to ensure that these were not harmed unnecessarily by development. Views of the countryside and the setting of the settlement areas are an important element of that defining character

An assessment was made of views and vistas around the Parish by parishioners in order to identify the more significant ones which are now specifically included in policy Mart8 of the neighbourhood plan. Eight views were chosen which were confined to views from, across, or near the built area. The are marked with an asterisk in the map on page 25.

This chapter records and describes not only the views listed in the Neighbourhood Plan but also others throughout the wider Parish that illustrate specific features of the landscape throughout the Parish worthy of conservation. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list.

### Landscape characteristics that influence views in the Parish

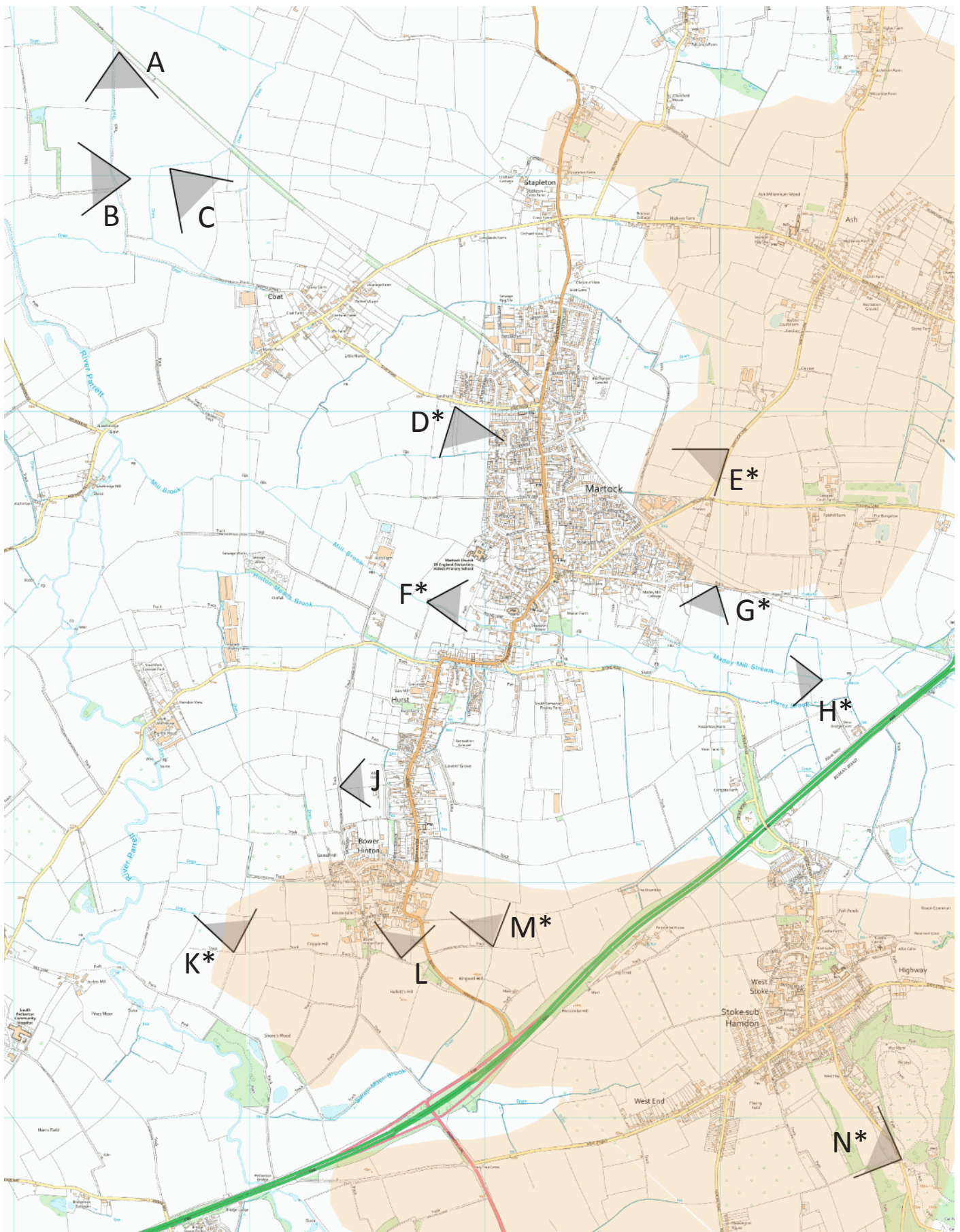
**1 Elevation.** The village is built in a valley mainly between the 12-20m contours. Land rising around the north and south edges from 30-50m is largely free of built form. This forms a rural first horizon which is a significant element in all longer views and glimpses from within the village and is a key feature of all the views across the village

**2 Distant hills.** On three sides, north, east and south, distant views of hills; Mendips, Ham Hill, Blackdowns, form a second distant horizon visible only (apart from ham Hill) from higher ground across the village. Burrow Hill and the Quantocks can also be seen in the Eastern western distance from the west edge of the village in the few spots where trees do not intervene.

**3 The Somerset Moors** In the north east of the Parish, the dominant landscape feature is the level land of the Somerset Moors, mainly grass with a few intervening trees.

**4 Hidden from view.** The village itself is largely hidden from view on all sides, even from raised positions, because it is in a valley bottom and because views of all but the tallest (and newest) buildings are obscured by mature trees. The church tower is a landmark feature. Parrett Works chimney is a similar built landmark feature in the west of the Parish.

**5 Tree groups.** Tree groups form prominent features in many views; the Hallett Oaks (south) and rows of Lombardy poplars in the Recreation Ground and to the west of the village are examples. Rows of poplar are traditionally planted to give shelter to the cider orchards. The fine Lebanon Cedar just beyond the churchyard is a prominent feature on the village edge in the west. A well-known tree visible from many parts of the village is the Hawthorn atop the perfectly symmetrical Burrow Hill in the distant south west. Orchards, characterised by straight rows of tall cider apple trees were once common all round the village and a number of old orchards remain. A number of new ones have recently been planted.



Views in and around Martock Parish.

Land above 30m is shaded brown. The asterisks indicate that the view is mentioned in Policy Mart8 of the Neighbourhood Plan



**6 The horizon.** Looking outwards from the village, the horizon, when it can be glimpsed, is marked by the dotted Line of Visual Containment on the Landscape Map (page xx). A key element of this is that it is that the land in front of the horizon is still largely free of built form so that this skyline is a natural one. So far, no building, other than the odd farm building, has intruded on this space characterised by the gentler slope of the rising land that forms a natural rim around the village. The nursing home on the village edge on Foldhill Lane, despite its grass roofs, and the proposed new Foldhill buildings (planning permission in 2017) are a worrying intrusion on this space.

**7 Glimpses of buildings.** Many views across the village show glimpses of roofs, the main visible feature of the built form. These, in general, blend well into view because they are mainly Double Roman tiles made locally that have matured well and complement the matured hamstone. Terracing ensures that these do not appear unduly fragmented with an attractive variation provided by different orientations of the terraces. The only built intrusion on the landscape is the occasional glimpse of brightly coloured modern render through the trees.

## Viewpoints in and around the Parish

The views that follow are typical of the different areas of the Parish; this list is not exclusive. The map above shows their location and orientation.



### View A

Looking south across Coat Hay Common across the Somerset Moors

Coat Hay is the last remaining tract of Commons in the Parish. It marks the southern border of the Somerset Moors, a tract of very flat land less than 10m above mean sea level. It is grassland, some unimproved, drained by rhynes and ditches marked by some poplars and occasional willows, remnants of a crop once cut and harvested annually. In the far distance are the Blackdown Hills



### View B

Looking west from Coat Hay across the Parrett river to Kingsbury Episcopi

A short distance away but completely hidden in this flat land is the village of Kingsbury Episcopi. The tower of its fine church, a Moors landmark, is hidden in plain sight behind the tree in the left distance. Local Hamstone buildings fade into the background in this part of Somerset.



### View C

South west from Coat Hay Common

South west of Coat Hay Common is the hamlet of Coat just visible through the trees. The Moors come to an end at Coat where landscape begins to rise, gently at first to Martock, invisible in this view, but then in the distance by some 100m to the top of the neolithic hill fort of Ham Hill. The highest point on the left is marked by a war memorial, visible to the naked eye but hardly in this photograph.



### View D

Looking south from Coat Road along the west edge of the village

The newer houses on the left are visible as gardens are small and have not had time to fully mature. Further towards the old village only the church tower is visible. The horizon behind the church is Ham Hill and on the right, the nearer, Ringwell and Halletts Hill with its signature oak trees just visible.



### View E.

Looking south west across the village from Foldhill

This is another view of the twentieth century end of the village where smaller gardens have left the houses visible. The spire of the Wesleyan chapel is on the right. The middle distance appears heavily wooded; it is orchard country where views are dominated by the tall windbreak trees, usually poplar. The distant horizon is formed by the Blackdown Hills but in front and to the right is the symmetrical Burrow Hill with its single Hawthorn on top

## View F

Looking towards the village centre from the old moated manor field in the westwest.



Eric Seeley, Green Man Studios, Hurst

The painting is of a much appreciated view of the village. The west side of the village is a floodplain, an area of open fields, with only some of the former hedges still remaining usually trimmed low. Many fields are still grass, some of it, further from the village, unimproved and protected, flooding frequently. Views towards the village are of high hedges and trees with occasional evidence of built form beyond. This is, however, the best view of the fine Grade I listed village Church behind the spectacular nineteenth century Lebanon Cedar in the field of the former moated Manor.



## View G

Looking south across the village from Foldhill to Bower Hinton

This is a view south from Foldhill of Halletts Hill to the left with its landmark row of four mature oaks, once a hedge, from Foldhill, the higher land north of the village. The trees appear just below the horizon on the left which is formed by the distant Blackdowns. An important feature of this view (as with others around the village) is the open countryside on the higher ground around the village into which the built form does not intrude, apart from a few farmyards. Typically, this higher ground is crossed with old hedges, some of which, next to the droves are often double rows with mature trees. There is typically little evidence of habitation as the village buildings are tucked down below the 30m contour and most prominent features visible in the valley bottom are tall mature trees and the church tower in the far right)



### View H

View from Stoke Road west towards the village

This is the view from Stoke Road looking towards the village; The hamstone Parish church merges invisibly into the background next to first tree on the left. The view shows on the right the setting of old Grade II\* listed Madey Mill with its associated waterworks now marked by trees and hedges. This flat land east of the Mill is still mainly grassland with a number of mature trees marking hedges and former hedges.



### View J

View towards Hurst from Broad Lane in the west

Little evidence of built form is visible looking along this level land from the east side of Broad lane anywhere down to the river. The buildings in the centre are in fact allotment sheds with a few houses visible behind. Hurst village is largely hidden just behind the mature trees and shrubs of the long gardens behind the terraces in the middle ground. These extend round to Blind Lane, Bower Hinton, to the south east (right). The north edge of Ringwell Hill forms the first horizon behind the village, unbuilt. The Ham Hill monument forms a very distant feature on the second horizon.



### View K

Looking north down the Parrett valley from Cripple Hill

Looking downstream along the Parrett Valley towards the Moors. The land is flat with a number of prominent landmarks such as the Victorian Parrett works chimney and the tower of Kingsbury Episcopi church both on the left.



### View L

Looking north from Halletts Hill over the village towards the mendips

This view looks right over the village to Foldhill. Little can be seen of the village save the hamstone buildings with Bridgewater tiles, local materials blending well into the view. In the very far distance, the second horizon is formed by the Mendip Hills



### View M

Looking north from Ringwell Hill south of Bower Hinton

A fine view of the whole village from Ringwell Hill to the south. Some of the houses in the valley bottom are partly visible, particularly new ones, but most are hidden by the landscape and trees. Opposite are the open fields of Foldhill, crossed with hedges and droves. The upper northern side of the village is edged by the old railway line, part cutting and part embankment, marked with a row of trees and bushes. Prominent in the middle distance is the row of Lombardy Poplars across the recreation ground. The Mendips for a distant horizon



View N

The popular view of Somerset from Ham Hill

This long view is probably Somerset's finest. It is a panorama of the lowlands stretching almost 180 degrees from the Blackdowns to the Mendips. This is just a small telephoto element of it showing the old centre of Martock, almost completely hidden; the church tower marking the spot