

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER background for the Neighbourhood Plan

The Ecclesbourne River flows north to south on the western edge of the parish, and a heritage railway, the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway, mirrors its route. The B5023 Wirksworth to Derby road runs borders the southern parish boundary.

The A517 Ashbourne Road runs along the northern edge of our boundary, passing through Blackbrook (named from the small stream trickling through the hamlet) where there is a ford to Lumb Lane. Lanes and roads in the parish are generally good, often narrow in places and lined with mixed hedgerows species - hazel, hawthorn, ash, holly, bramble, blackthorn and hedge maple. Roadside verges have an abundance of wildflowers including bluebells, primroses, wild garlic and vetches.

The south and southwest of the parish is mainly mixed farmland, grazing cattle and sheep, enclosed with traditional hedges, small copses of oak, ash and sycamore.

A wild plum-like fruit known as golden bullace, can be found growing as a small tree or bush in the hedgerows in the south of the parish. It was grown in large quantities in Norfolk in the 19th Century for use in preserving and cooking.

A brook rising from the fields of Yew Tree Farm runs through a small copse in Spring Hollow; itself a haven for marsh marigolds, wood anemone and bluebells. It then meanders through Green Belt designated fields before entering the River Derwent at Duffield.

The east of the parish rises to 190 metres, its highest point and is known as Firestone. It is the site for two telephone masts and a couple of WW 11 Home Guard pillboxes. 'Firestone' is thought to refer to the red stone which was once quarried for its iron content and for building.. Traditional hedgerows give way to stone walls, gorse and some copses. Silver birch, ash and sycamore grow on the sites of old sandstone quarries, one of which is recognised as a site of importance for nature conservation. Firestone offers splendid views south of Derby, Rugeley Power Station to the West and the distant Weaver Hills to the North

The Chevin Golf course runs from the south end of Firestone, leading down to Duffield. Firestone connects to North Lane, thought to be Roman, offering a variety of popular routes for walkers.

Opposite Goodwins Lane is a well-preserved pinfold where straying animals were impounded until the owner paid a fine for their release.

Spring Hollow is part of the ancient Derby to Wirksworth turnpike. The junction 'triangle' was the site of a gibbet on which criminals were hung in chains. Spring Hollow features a spout that was erected to commemorate Queen Victoria's 1897 Diamond Jubilee. This is fed by a spring that has never been known to fail and supplied neighbouring farms and cottages, until 1952 when the entire parish received piped water.

The Northeast of the parish is known as Goodwins Lumb and the Depth of Lumb. The area composes arable pastureland, with deep steep-sided valleys of woodland - mainly ash, oak, hazel and beech. These are recognised as sites of importance for nature and conservation. The direct north of the parish is mainly arable and pasture land with mixed species hedgerows and woodland, known as Jenny Tang, which was the site of Roman kilns. These were excavated in

1958; examples of the pottery can be seen in Derby Museum and are mentioned at Housteads Roman fort on Hadrians Wall.

Lumb Lane leads to three dwellings. A footpath leads to steps, down to the foot bridge in the depth of Lumb. Lumb Lane also connects with a bridle path; a site of local historical importance. On either side of the path grow foxgloves, blackberry bushes and hedgerows, typical to the parish. This is a perfect Summer habitat for many species of native butterfly and dragonflies. The bridle path meets the ford at Blackbrook and the busy A517 Ashbourne Road.

The parish has an abundance of birdlife and wildlife with the hedgerows providing nesting habitat for numerous species such as goldfinch, yellowhammers, wrens and many types of warbler. Sparrowhawks also use this patchwork of hedgerows as their hunting ground. The deep-sided wooded valleys of our lumbs and woods make it perfect habitat for three of our native species of woodpecker. Tree creepers stalk the trunks of trees for insects and nuthatches frequent the high canopy. The deep bank sides of the lumbs are perfect habitat for badgers and numerous native animals. On crisp, autumn mornings jays send out their alarm call; game birds are in abundance; lapwings nest on the arable farmland; brown hares can be seen boxing on March mornings. Kestrels and buzzards are often on the hunt.

Both the banks of the Ecclesbourne River and the stream Blackbrook support a rich array of wildlife including kingfishers, moorhens and dippers. On a late spring evening wild, brown trout rise to take a mayfly and the rare water vole is in residence.

The parish has approximately 7 miles of well-walked and well-maintained public footpaths, giving walkers the chance to take in the natural aspects of our parish.

Historically, little was built on the floodplain of the Ecclesbourne River valley. The meandering river is followed by alder trees and other vegetation and can also be glimpsed by Ecclesbourne Valley trains passengers.

With regard to the matter of Environmental Designations and Biodiversity, the Neighbourhood Plan includes one area of belt, which is in the south east of the parish.

The parish features two sites of importance for nature conservation, both recognised by AVBC in the Local Plan. These are the Depth of Lumb and Goodwins Lumb. Both are important in the landscape as wildlife habitat sites.

The bridle path of Lumb Lane is recognised by AVBC as an important geological site.

The north of the parish, including Shottlegate and Blackbrook, is recognised by AVBC as a Special Landscape Area.

The Ecclesbourne River has been chosen by the Environment Agency as one of only ten pilot projects in England, looking at new ways to improve watercourses. The project 'love your river', aims to involve the whole community in tackling issues that affect the quality of the catchment area and its wildlife.