

A Heritage Strategy for Swale

2020 – 2032

Adopted

March 2020



Swale Borough-Wide Heritage Strategy 2020-2032

Adopted
(March 2020)

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Foreword



Swale's heritage is a major asset, not just in terms of our cultural offer and our visitor economy, but also regarding the area's ability to attract investment and employment. Key factors in making an area attractive as a place to live, learn, work, invest and visit include jobs, quality of environment and social and cultural infrastructure. Swale's heritage is essential to all of these.

Swale's historic buildings and areas deliver a wide range of economic, social and environmental benefits and support a wide range of economic activity. This includes accommodation for businesses, recreational facilities, community facilities and residential accommodation. Heritage-led regeneration can help to achieve significant economic and physical transformations in Swale, as this strategy demonstrates.

A well-maintained historic environment helps to create a sustainable environment, with a sense of place and positive

image. This helps create a sense of civic pride in the places where we live, and the environment around us.

Heritage must form an integral part of Swale Borough's cultural, economic development, regeneration and tourism strategies if the area is to finally realise its potential. This document puts forward a positive strategy for Swale's heritage, to maximise the chances of it helping the Borough to meet that overall potential.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Baldock". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Councillor Mike Baldock,

Cabinet Member for Planning and Swale Borough Council Heritage Champion

Executive Summary

SCOPE:

This strategy provides a framework for the designation, conservation, management and physical and economic regeneration of Swale's Historic Buildings and Areas, including designated historic parks and gardens. From analysis of evidence on Swale's heritage and some early engagement with local stakeholders, a high level vision and set of five associated priorities have been identified. These are set out below and were agreed in the context of the difficult challenges outlined in summary here.

CHALLENGES:

Working in partnership with others towards achieving the effective and sustainable protection and enhancement of Swale's heritage in the difficult economic and political climate we face at the time of writing presents a considerable challenge, both for the Council, and for those it seeks to work with. The challenge as far as the Council is concerned, is made all the more difficult, but all the more pressing to meet in the context of much, including some of its most significant heritage, being at risk of substantial irreversible harm or in the worst cases, even total loss. Running parallel with this problem, which is a particular issue for Swale Borough, are the significant development pressures and growing climate change considerations, which Swale in common with many other local authorities face. As such, this strategy has been drafted demonstrating the understanding, ambition, commitment and necessary resourcing to start working towards making the vision set out below a reality at the conclusion of the strategy period, if not sooner.

VISION:

A vibrant and widely-known heritage which is valued for its own sake and for the long term benefits it provides to the people, economy and environment of the Borough of Swale

PRIORITIES:

1. To conserve, and where possible enhance Swale's heritage buildings, structures and areas and moveable/portable heritage as a cultural, economic, community and environmental asset to the area, in particular by positively managing the Council's own heritage assets, and by establishing a programme for the review and appraisal of Swale's conservation areas;
2. To make use of the borough's heritage to help achieve and promote sustainable and inclusive growth and regeneration, social and economic wellbeing, and civic pride, in particular by actions to tackle and specifically reduce Swale's heritage at risk across the full range of nationally and locally designated heritage assets;
3. To recognise and promote the role of Swale's heritage in creating or enhancing local distinctiveness and a positive image for the area as a place to live, learn, work and visit, in particular by the Council continuing to work in an enabling role to develop and support projects and initiatives by local groups, societies and businesses that would bring about significant public benefit.

4. To ensure Swale's heritage forms an integral part of local strategies and initiatives to promote tourism and the visitor economy, including through the conservation and subsequent positive management of the Borough's internationally significant maritime heritage (at Sheerness Dockyard) and aviation heritage (at Eastchurch) on the Isle of Sheppey;
5. Raising the historic environment (and the important social history associated with it) up the agenda by promoting awareness and understanding of Swale's heritage among local residents, businesses and visitors to the area, in particular to help realise the cultural, educational and associated health benefits it can offer.

The five priorities will be considered and addressed through the following **Strategy Strands**:

A: Understanding and Designation (our heritage and its significance);

B: Positive Management and Intervention (Our heritage: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats – SWOT); and

C: Capitalising and Championing (Our heritage: valuing it and fulfilling its potential).

The series of Action Plans deriving from this Heritage Strategy will show how the proposed actions are linked to the priorities and underlying strategy strands, and that the highest priority in the early years of the strategy plan period will be given principally to tackling and reducing the major issue of heritage at risk facing the Borough.

Resources for delivering the strategy:

The Council has dedicated, albeit modest existing in-house staffing resources available to support and where appropriate, initiate this important work. These are principally spread between the Council's Planning Service and Economy & Community Service teams, although this being a corporate strategy, officers from across the whole range of service areas and teams are anticipated to provide input as needed. It was however recognized in the development of this strategy that further resource will be needed to support the significant challenges that lie ahead and to this end, the Council is therefore publicly committed to supporting the first 3 year action plan of this 12 year heritage strategy with an injection of £250,000, to help provide additional heritage specialist capacity and in some cases, limited physical works.

The Council is fully aware of the need to properly resource the priorities of the heritage strategy beyond the initial 3 years so that it can have a continual, and potentially momentum building positive effect on heritage conservation in the Borough. It also recognizes that its own limited resources (both staffing and financial) will only stretch so far, and as such it will, wherever possible, work with other agencies, developers and stakeholders to maximize the scope and benefits of this investment and the associated work to be undertaken. In particular, the Council will seek out and where feasible, apply for any match-funding opportunities and capacity building grants that exist.

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Note: Except where indicated otherwise, all photographic images were taken by the Council’s Heritage Team

1. Introduction: A Heritage Strategy for Swale

1.1: Why a heritage strategy?

A heritage strategy is needed to help the Borough Council, key stakeholders and other interested parties protect and manage the historic environment in Swale Borough in a sustainable and informed way that gets the best benefit and use of the Borough's heritage and realizes the opportunities that it offers. This vital work includes setting an appropriate overall vision for the heritage in our Borough, and setting out a vision and set of priorities that, as far as possible, align with the plans and aspirations of local communities such that this is a strategy that can be as inclusive and widely supported as possible.

There is no specific legal requirement for a local authority to publish a heritage strategy, but in the context of the planning system for England and Wales, which is essentially a plan-led system for the management of development, the key central government document which sets out the framework for local planning policy through local plans (the National Planning Policy Framework, Edition 2, Feb. 2019) sets out in paragraph 185, that '*Local Planning Authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats...*'

It is important to recognize at the outset that this heritage strategy is provided not as a restraint on change, but one which seeks to ensure that change insofar as it affects our heritage is accommodated sensitively such that the benefits our heritage provides are not eroded at the expense of the wider public benefit it typically provides.

The term heritage asset is one that is necessarily much used in this Heritage Strategy. It is defined by the government as '*A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing)*'. The Council recognizes however, that there are types of heritage that exist outside the remit and control of the planning system, and hence the scope of this Heritage Strategy is not just limited to the types of heritage considered within the planning system. More on this below, and for more information on designated heritage assets, please refer to sections 3.4, 3.14 and 3.15 of this document.

1.2: Scope of the heritage strategy

This heritage strategy is therefore first and foremost a planning system based strategy designed to support and reinforce the core and development management policies set out in Bearing Fruits 2031: The Swale Borough Local Plan (adopted July 2017). Critically however, it is also designed to function as a necessary evidence base for ongoing work on the replacement local plan, and furthermore, it links to wider corporate strategies in order to help deliver wider priorities of the Council.

The Swale Heritage Strategy builds on work completed as an evidence base for the current adopted local plan, namely the Swale Heritage Asset Review document

(June 2015), produced by Urban Vision CIC on behalf of the Council. The Heritage Asset Review document is too large to include as an appendix to this Heritage Strategy document, but can be viewed via this link: <https://archive.swale.gov.uk/assets/Planning-General/Planning-Policy/Evidence-Base/LP-Examination-documents/Swale-Heritage-Asset-Review-June-2015.pdf>

The Strategy is appropriately focused on the historic environment, and whilst consideration is given to historic landscapes (see Chapter 3, Section 3.12) the wider topic of natural heritage is not included here. This is, or will be covered in some detail in other Local Plan evidence base documents including the existing Swale Biodiversity Action Plan (2016) and the planned Blue & Green Infrastructure Strategy or Supplementary Planning Document, the work on which will commence later this year. Importantly however the Borough contains a wealth of heritage in the shape of archives, artefacts/archaeological finds and large moveable machines (such as steam trains) at its various museums and heritage attractions. As this Strategy is not just an evidence base/supporting document for the Local Plan, but also sets out the Council's wider, corporate position on the subject of heritage in the wider sense, it has therefore been designed to incorporate consideration of what might be conveniently termed, portable/moveable heritage.

The Strategy has been also purposely designed to describe the rich heritage of the Borough in an accessible way with signposting to further information given that there is only so much information a document of this nature can sensibly contain. It is anticipated that the Strategy can be used by a wide range of individuals, groups and organisations, etc., to better appreciate the heritage around them, and to help communities and groups in developing their own projects and initiatives. The Strategy can also be used as an educational tool and in conjunction with other projects/initiatives (e.g. heritage-related volunteer options) to promote health and wellbeing.



1. Image of the new Sheppey Crossing, with the Kings Ferry Transporter Bridge in the foreground: two pieces of key 20th and 21st century transport infrastructure linking the island and mainland parts of Swale Borough

1.3: A unique strategy for our unique Borough

The Borough of Swale is unique in many ways, and as such, whilst there will be some heritage issues and opportunities in Swale also facing other local authority areas, a copy and paste exercise could never be truly effective. This is not just because of the range of heritage assets we have in the Borough (a number of which are of international significance), but also because of the rather special geography of the Borough, and the wide range of communities contained within. Many of these are represented by well established and knowledgeable amenity societies and other groups that have a strong interest in understanding, protecting and maintaining the heritage which helps to define and characterize their local surroundings, and in many cases provide a sense of place and pride in their local area. This is a real strength.

The Borough Council therefore wishes this to be a strategy which is as much for the residents and business in the Borough, as it is for the Council, and it is hoped that following on from the constructive process of public consultation, this is a Heritage Strategy which all of those with a positive, publicly minded interest in the Borough can feel is partly shaped by them and can therefore be wholeheartedly supported.



2. Swale's Armorial Bearings

An explanation of the details of this Civic Crest can be found at www.swale.gov.uk/armorial-bearings-of-swale

1.4: Community involvement with heritage projects

The Council wants to engage with the local communities in developing, implementing and completing projects to ensure that the end product or outcomes are ones that are supported beyond just the Council itself and key third party organisations such as Kent County Council and Historic England. It fully recognizes that a real strength of the Borough's heritage are the highly active and knowledgeable heritage focussed stakeholder groups that are found in several areas of Swale and that can and should help to deliver the Strategy.

It will also look to enable/facilitate community groups that wish to deliver heritage projects through staff support where possible, and/or through grants (including through its current scheme of heritage, culture and members grants). This role is important given the pressures on public spending, and giving guidance and support to the local community to deliver heritage actions not only provides better value on financial investment, but also empowers and inspires the local community to engage more fully with their heritage.



3. Visitors at an archaeological site at Newington

1.5: The Swale Local Plan and heritage

The Local Plan 'Bearing Fruits 2031: The Swale Borough Local Plan', was adopted 26th July 2017, and includes the following vision.

'It is 2031 and Swale is known by the fruits of its endeavours.

We have harnessed our assets – a strategic location, diverse communities and an outstanding natural environment – and are a sustainable, flourishing place in which to enjoy life and do business, with:

- Sittingbourne transformed into an attractive, competitive and prosperous town, with a thriving centre that residents across the Borough are proud to use;
- Sheerness and Queenborough as beacons of coastal rejuvenation leading the way to success for all communities on the Isle of Sheppey;
- Faversham, a thriving market town and heritage destination that has grown organically; and
- Successful rural communities across the downs, farmed plains and coast as places of innovation; nurturing enterprise, local produce and greater self-reliance'.

The plan includes 12 core objectives, most of which are relevant to heritage, with objective 4 specifically focused on heritage, and shown in bold text for clarity:

1. Adapt to climate change with innovation, reduced use of resources, managed risk to our communities and opportunities for biodiversity to thrive.
2. Use our coastal assets to support a strong economy and a sustainably managed environment.
3. Support economic success and improve community wellbeing with a network of maintained, protected and improved natural assets in town and country.
4. **Conserve and enhance our historic and natural assets as the means to drive regeneration, tourism, and environmental quality and to reverse declines in their condition.**
5. Strive for high quality design to bring a better quality of life, opportunities for healthy living and self-confidence to our communities.
6. Be flexible, provide choice and support sectors that can build on our strengths, diversify our economy, promote investment in skills, and develop our distinct opportunities in pursuit of greener and pioneering technologies.
7. Bring economic growth, regeneration and community development, especially to our most deprived communities.
8. Support our farming and food sectors so that they are at the forefront of increasing food security, reducing food miles and increasing local food consumption.
9. Provide the right housing to support demographic change and housing needs to regenerate and build stronger, greener communities.
10. Develop tourism and culture to support regeneration, employment growth, communities and environmental management.
11. Improve prosperity and environmental quality with efficient and sustainable transport networks.

12. Ensure timely delivery of the services and infrastructure to support strong communities.

In addition, there are four place-based objectives, again, all relevant to heritage:

1. Re-establish Sittingbourne as the principal town with investment in retail, leisure, culture and community services and further education, within new and improved green spaces and streets.
2. Reinforce Sheppey's uniqueness by ensuring change: supports Sheerness as its commercial and service focus; strengthens and integrates communities at Rushenden and Queenborough and Minster and Halfway; manages coastal and heritage assets; modernises leisure and tourism industries; and supports isolated communities.
3. Sustain Faversham's role and character as an historic market town serving residents, visitors and a wider area with a range of businesses and services that increase diversity and interest.
4. Address identified needs in our rural communities so that they are sustained in ways that also respect their scale and character.

The strategic aims and associated strategic policies of the Local Plan recognise the importance of heritage and Strategic Policy 1 (Policy ST1) states at section 12 that (the Borough Council will seek to) 'Conserve and enhance the historic environment by applying national and local planning policy through the identification, assessment, and integration of development with the importance, form and character of heritage assets (including historic landscapes)'.

The core policies in the Local Plan are intended to build detail on the strategic aim policies and to ensure joined-up consideration across the themes covered, to matters of critical importance to the success of the Local Plan. They apply to all development proposals, and Core Policy 8 (Policy CP 8) deals specifically with 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment', making specific reference and commitment to the production of a borough-wide heritage strategy:

To support the Borough's heritage assets, the Council will prepare a Heritage Strategy. Development will sustain and enhance the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets to sustain the historic environment whilst creating for all areas a sense of place and special identity. Development proposals will, as appropriate:

- Accord with national planning policy in respect of heritage matters, together with any heritage strategy adopted by the Council;
- Sustain and enhance the significance of Swale's designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings in a manner appropriate to their significance and, where appropriate, in accordance with Policies DM30-DM34;
- Respond to the integrity, form and character of settlements and historic landscapes;
- Bring heritage assets into sensitive and sustainable use within allocations, neighbourhood plans, regeneration areas and town centres, especially for assets identified as being at risk on national or local registers;
- Respond positively to the conservation area appraisals and management strategies prepared by the Council;

- Respect the integrity of heritage assets, whilst meeting the challenges of a low carbon future; and
- Promote the enjoyment of heritage assets through education, accessibility, interpretation and improved access.

Policies for development management within the 2017 Local Plan have wide relevance for heritage. Policies specific to heritage protection include:

- Policy DM 32 Development involving listed buildings;
- Policy DM 33 Development affecting a conservation area;
- Policy DM 34 Scheduled Monuments and archaeological sites;
- Policy DM 35 Historic parks and gardens; and
- Policy DM 36 Areas of high townscape value

The Council is already working towards the replacement of the current adopted Local Plan (Bearing Fruits 2031) and the provision of this strategy will serve to underpin and inform the core and development management policies related to heritage conservation in the forthcoming replacement Local Plan. It will also help to influence the direction of travel for planned new housing and other types of growth to help ensure that such growth would not come at the expense of avoidable harm to the Borough's vitally important heritage.

1.6: Neighbourhood Plans and heritage

Faversham Creek Neighbourhood Plan

The Faversham Creek Neighbourhood Plan was made on 24th June 2017, following a successful referendum outcome. The 16 objectives of the plan include:

- Protect and enhance the Creek's rich and outstanding maritime, industrial and landscape heritage for educational and economic purposes.
- Create living and working environments that respond to the Creek's rich and outstanding maritime heritage, the demands for high-performing standards of sustainable development, whilst supporting existing businesses and their aspirations.

These objectives are addressed by a range of development management policies.



4. Part of Faversham Creek, adjacent to Standard Quay: one of the many character areas in the Faversham Conservation Area

Boughton & Dunkirk Neighbourhood Plan

This neighbourhood plan is in the process of being finalized, and is anticipated to be taken to public consultation and a subsequent referendum in the near future. The emerging Swale Heritage Strategy has already supported the development of, and evidence base for this neighbourhood plan through the review and recent adoption (for development management purposes) of character appraisal & management strategies for the 3 conservation areas within these two adjoining parishes.

Other neighbourhood plans

A number of these are expected to be made in the next few years, and it is anticipated that the actions arising from this Heritage Strategy will in many instances, support the development of these plans in directing new development in a sensitive and sustainable manner, which where possible will result in enhancement of the historic built and natural environment. Work has already commenced on a further neighbourhood plan for Faversham and the timing of the planned review work for the Faversham and Faversham-next-Preston Conservation Areas in the initial 3-year Action Plan has been brought forward to help inform this.

1.7: Other key complementary plans, strategies and frameworks

Swale Borough Corporate Plan

At the time of writing (March 2020), the new Corporate Plan 2020-2023 has just been through public consultation and it is anticipated to be adopted in May 2020. As it stands, the Corporate Plan contains 4 priorities, and the benefits that Swale's heritage brings to the Borough is very much recognized in Priority 2, which is focused on 'Investing in our environment and responding positively to global challenges'. One of the five objectives under this priority is 2.4: [To] *'Recognise and support our local heritage to give people pride in the place they live and boost the local tourism industry'*

Swale Visitor Economy Framework

Swale Borough Council recently prepared 'Swale - Your destinations of choice - A Visitor Economy Framework for Sittingbourne, Faversham and the Isle of Sheppey 2018 – 2023. This includes six priorities:

1. Identity, marketing and promotion;
2. Infrastructure and connectivity;
3. Public realm improvements;
4. Sector support – Open for Business;
5. Developing the cultural offer; and
6. Market segmentation and information management.

Specific actions under these priorities include:

- To deliver improvements to the public realm in our town centres and strategic gateways to create a more visitor-friendly environment (car parks, lighting, street furniture, signing);
- To encourage and promote quality assessment to meet resident and visitor expectations of accommodation and visitor attractions;
- To develop a range of new and unique and distinctive experiences to include food and drink, sport and leisure, festivals and events, arts and culture, history and heritage and outdoor activities in coastal and rural destinations;
- To deliver enhancements to the Borough's physical environment that benefit residents and visitors

This heritage strategy can make a significant contribution to achieving the priorities and actions of the Visitor Economy Framework, and visitor data has already shown that the Borough's heritage plays a significant role in attracting visitors to the area. However, it is considered that more can be achieved in this respect, for example, through the development of the Borough's key heritage themes, such as Aviation & Defence heritage. These can provide packages that raise the profile of the heritage, bringing together different types of assets (designated and undesignated) with the stories of the Borough. Heritage packages can help to encourage overnight stays which further support the visitor economy.

A Strategy and Service Charter for Planning Enforcement (Oct. 2017)

This sets out the Council's approach to tackling breaches of planning control and categorises them into the priority order of Major, Medium or Low. Heritage assets are given some consideration in the framing of these priorities e.g. Demolition of a listed building, breaches of an Article 4 Direction, and works that are irreversible or irreplaceable and constitute a serious breach are all placed within the Major Priority category. The Strategy and Charter are due to be reviewed by the autumn of 2020 and when this takes place, they will be revised to ensure that fuller and adequate consideration is given to the significant issues of dealing with owners that fail to properly maintain their heritage building, land or structure, along with associated issues of heritage at risk. The review will also look at whether any further delegation of powers should be provided to officers of the Council to allow for necessarily rapid interventions in cases of urgent threats to heritage assets. Further future reviews of and potential revisions to the Strategy and Service Charter for Planning Enforcement will also take into account the need to deal with the aforementioned heritage issues during the plan life of this Strategy.

1.8: Our big heritage issues, and possible solutions

The big heritage issues for the Borough of Swale as far as heritage is concerned can all be neatly filed under the principal headings of Heritage at Risk and Untapped Potential, although there are multiple strands of issues sitting under each of those, and there is also overlap of the issues between those two main headings.

The issue of heritage at risk is considered in more detail elsewhere in this heritage strategy (principally at Chapter 4) but in outline the principal issues and the Council's related responses are as follows:

Issue 1: An already significant number of conservation areas, listed buildings and other heritage assets in a poor and declining condition, such that the heritage significance of these special areas, buildings and structures is reduced, and in some cases may not be fully retrievable (heritage assets are finite resources and once they have been lost, or irreparably damaged, they cannot be replaced).

Response: An early focus on and review of the conservation areas, listed buildings and other heritage assets most affected. In the case of conservation areas, the provision of an up-to-date character appraisal and management plan will be provided to enable more sensitive and effective management of these areas moving forward, with additional controls (in the shape of Article 4 Directions and Areas of Special Advertisement Control) and associated guidance additionally being introduced where necessary to better manage change in these areas. In all cases, the Council will initially seek to work cooperatively with property and landowners in addressing issues of neglect and breaches of planning control, whether deliberate or unintended. This will be carried out in the context of helping property and landowners to understand what is significant in heritage terms about their asset, and how that significance can be managed effectively. Where cooperation is not provided, the Council will use the full range of enforcement powers (provided through national legislation) at its disposal to address the issues and remedy the harm. The range of powers available to this and all other Council's in the UK is referenced in some detail at Chapter 4 of this Strategy. However, for more information on the powers available to Council's to address issues of building neglect

and deterioration, readers may find it helpful to view the Historic England guidance on this set out in its publication called Stopping The Rot. See: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/stoppingtherot/>



5. Boat Store at Sheerness Port – Heritage at Risk Grade I listed building

Issue 2: An increasing number of problem owners which, or who display little interest in properly maintaining their property in an appropriately sensitive manner to help protect and conserve the special interest of the building(s)/structure(s) in question, and/or the character and appearance of the wider Conservation Area. The owners in this respect range from individual people and small local companies to significant landowners and multinational companies.

Response: See above. Additionally, in the worst case scenarios, the Council will (where the public interest case justifies it) seriously consider the use of the compulsory purchase powers available to it and may take on temporary or even permanent ownership of, heritage land, buildings and/or structures which current owners are allowing (deliberately or otherwise) to be harmfully altered and/or fall into decay. Any such compulsory purchase would it is anticipated, be carried out in partnership with a development partner (e.g. a building preservation trust or developer), but the Council will consider taking such action in isolation, if necessary.

Issue 3: Limited Council resources, and in some cases, controls, to effectively tackle the inappropriate actions of such owners. As a general rule of thumb, there is no such thing as a problem building or structure – it is almost always the actions or inaction of owners or other parties with an interest in a building/structure (e.g. leaseholders and tenants) that result in problems developing for any particular building/structure.

Response: See above. Additionally, the Council is committed to strengthening its planning enforcement function and the associated Planning Enforcement Strategy and Charter to ensure that fuller and adequate consideration is given to the significant issues of dealing with owners that fail to properly maintain their heritage building, land or structure, along with associated issues of heritage at risk. Furthermore, the Council will continue to explore the possibility of recruiting a dedicated Heritage at Risk Officer – who would be able to focus in effectively on this significant problem – via a capacity building grant.

Issue 4: An unbalanced mechanism for working with property owners to help conserve heritage significance: Previously, the Council was able to offer conservation grants to help the owners of listed buildings maintain their properties in an appropriately sensitive way, this being appropriate given the premium that typically has to be paid for the types of construction materials, construction detailing and level of skill/craftsmanship needed in this respect. Significant ongoing cuts to local government grants over a period of years has meant that the grant scheme has had to be abandoned, and as such, only positive advice can be offered by the Council in relation to repairs and alterations, and in certain cases intervention when it is clear that changes taking place are not appropriate. The previous ‘carrot and stick’ approach that was possible has thus given way to a largely ‘stick’ only approach which is unfortunate, as it is recognized that some listed building owners genuinely struggle to afford to be able to upkeep their homes, or other types of buildings in an appropriately sensitive manner.

Response: There are no obvious solutions to this problem in the context of central government’s significant ongoing funding cuts to local authorities in the last decade or so, and no prospect of this trend being significantly reversed within the lifetime of this strategy. However, the Council can (at the time of writing) offer very limited heritage grants for projects that would offer a clear public benefit, and the grants that the Council can offer will be reviewed from time to time in the context of what the Council can realistically afford to provide, and the type and level of grants available from other sources. The Council will continue to help to signpost those in need of financial assistance (to carry out essential repairs/maintenance or clear, sensitive improvements to heritage assets) to other possible sources and will also continue to provide free specialist advice, where requested to owners of heritage assets wishing to undertake repairs.

Issue 5: Exacerbating the above stated issue is the fact that the VAT system in this country in terms of rate reductions, is biased towards new works and alterations over repairs, which as well as making repair work more expensive than it need be, also arguably leads to a tendency for some owners to wait for elements of their buildings to fall apart and then having to replace them. In the process, the special interest of the building/structure can therefore sometimes be diminished.

Response: Again, there is no obvious solution to this problem, following the government’s decision to introduce VAT to approved works on listed buildings for

the first time ever in 2012. The Swale Borough based, but nationally operating Listed Property Owners Club with the strong backing of the multiple local and national heritage focused organisations making up the Heritage Alliance are leading the way in terms of seeking to persuade the government to replace the current VAT regime with one which would encourage and allow for the improved conservation of the nation's listed buildings. The Council will consider the options it has to best help influence the government's thinking on this matter.

Issue 6: Development proposals impacting on the Borough's settlement and landscape patterns and features, and on its archaeological and built heritage assets.

Response: The Council cannot set the amount of new housing it is required to provide but it can and will use the various tools and controls available to it at both the site allocation and planning application assessment stage to limit and mitigate, and where possible avoid any harm in this respect. Ongoing and planned work around the historical development of settlements, landscape types in the Borough (including historic landscapes) and the development of a Local List, which will identify important local heritage (including built and landscape feature heritage assets), will help to make the Council more alert to potential impacts in this respect and this will in turn inform the discussions and negotiations that take place with developers. With particular reference to archaeology, The Borough Council would normally consult the county's archaeologists on development that falls within mapped Areas of Archaeological Potential as well as on larger scale of development in other areas. The mapping has limitations in that it is not up to date and is based on where archaeological remains have been identified from previous investigation and survey and concentrates around the northern part of the Borough. In reality the archaeological potential of the borough is more widespread, and so to address the shortcomings of the consultation system, revised mapping is being prepared by the County Council. Relabelled as Archaeological Notification Areas to reflect their purpose, the new maps will recognise the widespread potential in the borough and guide consultation in a scaled approach. The mapping will also be supported by improved guidance to developers.

Issue 7: Coastal erosion, flooding and climate change impacting on heritage.

Response: The Council is not the responsible body for flood protection, but it will work with the Environment Agency (which is), along with other relevant parties in seeking to find feasible and sustainable solutions to this growing issue. The Council will seek to ensure that new development is either not at risk of flooding or designed to cope with limited flooding. In particular, it will seek to ensure that the provision of new development does not generate knock-on flood risk issues for existing areas and that sustainable urban drainage systems are put in place for new development that are designed to cope with the increased probability of flooding. In respect of heritage assets, the Council will look to work constructively with the owners of such assets to allow for the development of mitigation measures where necessary, in doing so carefully weighing up the possible harm to a heritage asset through the introduction of such measures against the benefits of the longer-term conservation of the asset. The re-use of disused historic buildings will be generally encouraged and there are sustainability benefits in doing so over new build which will, repeated as a cumulative practice on a national and international basis, help to limit the carbon footprint of growth thus helping to limit climate change.

Issue 8: Harmful agricultural operations and leisure activities impacting on heritage.

Response: The Council has limited control over many agricultural operations as many benefit from the range of permitted development rights allowed for this by government. In some instances, there may be the scope for the Council to work with the landowner/farmer to agree a safeguarding measure, or where this is not possible, in some cases the Council may be able to introduce additional planning controls to protect a feature of heritage interest, and if the feature is deemed significant enough, consideration could be given to formal designation at a national level which would provide protection from potentially harmful operations. Archaeological heritage is particularly vulnerable in this respect and a large part of the solution to this particular issue is in having or developing awareness of archaeological heritage that may be harmed by such operations, and looking to put in controls to prevent this, where feasible. The additional mapping work which the County Council is preparing may help to identify where some interventions may be necessary. In terms of impact from leisure activities impacting on heritage assets, the key will be working with the landowners to agree safeguarding measures, which in part may involve making activity users aware of the heritage interest they may unwittingly be harming through interpretation and e.g. if necessary to protect particularly vulnerable/sensitive heritage features, some form of barrier control.

Issue 9: Vandalism affecting many heritage assets throughout the Borough. In some cases, this has been severe and resulted in buildings being burnt to the ground by arsonists.

Response: This is principally a matter for the Kent Police to try and tackle. It is unlikely that this problem could ever be completely eradicated, but there are measures that can be taken to reduce the risks of vandalism taking place, and in some cases, limit the extent of harm that would arise where vandalism does arise. The Council will aim to support the owners of heritage assets affected by this type of problem and where appropriate, will liaise with the owner(s) and Kent Police to eliminate or mitigate this problem as far as possible. Whilst the Council will seek to ensure that the special significance of a heritage asset is not unduly compromised in the possible introduction of measures to address this issue, a pragmatic view will be taken, particularly in relation to properties or areas of land that have been subjected to repeated acts of vandalism, which have been formally recorded by the police. Furthermore, the Council is committed to working with the Kent Police and relevant owners to prosecute offenders that have been caught and ensure that the impact of their crimes (notably to the heritage significance of affected properties or land) is properly taken into account by the courts. To this end the Council is committed to following the steps already taken by Canterbury City Council and Dover District Council (and a number of other local authorities elsewhere in England) in signing up to the Memorandum of Understanding as a proposed further local authority member of the Alliance to Reduce Crime against Heritage (ARCH). For more information on this initiative, please visit the website hosted by Historic England: <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/caring-for-heritage/heritage-crime/>

Issue 10: An increasing problem of historic buildings being targeted for their construction materials (principally lead, but sometimes other types of material which can be sold on through the reclaimed materials market), and in the case of buildings which are not permanently occupied (typically churches and church halls), break-ins to steal the contents of these buildings. As well as the loss of sometimes very valuable artifacts, this can also result in damage to important historic fabric such as doors and/or windows used as the route into and out of the building by thieves.

Response: Measures have already been taken at a national level to reduce this problem (e.g. by the firmer regulation of the scrap metal market), but the problems still persist both of metal theft, and for other types of heritage crime. As per the above, the Council will work with property owners and Kent Police to eliminate or reduce this problem as much as possible, and a pragmatic and proportionate view will be taken by the Council in relation to proposals (requiring listed building consent and/or planning permission) to introduce security measures such as CCTV and/or alarm systems where advice from the police or independent security consultants indicate such measures would likely be effective in deterring or limiting harm to the historic fabric of heritage assets.

Issue 11: The continued growth pressure in the London and southeast regions over many years has resulted in more vehicles on our roads, resulting in heavy traffic levels and associated air pollution affecting conservation areas and other historic areas on principal roads, notably Newington High Street Conservation Area, and Ospringe Conservation Area on the A2 trunk road.

Response: The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) provides comprehensive and balanced assessment on the present and predicted global warming impact, including mitigation and adaptation measures. The IPCC will hopefully influence future legislation and government action with regards to targets, plans and policies for improving the natural environment and the protection of it. Swale Borough Council has declared a climate emergency and action plan in response to recommendations from the IPCC.

A strategic Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) (2018 – 2022) is in place, which was approved by Defra in September 2019. At present in Swale there are 5 Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA's) declared for the exceedance of the annual Air Quality Objective for NO₂. The key priorities are to target reductions in emissions from vehicle fleets, smooth traffic flows, reduce congestions and protect local communities. The AQAP aims to deliver compliance of air quality objectives through a combination of strategic (e.g. Clean Air Zone along the A2) and local focused AQMA (e.g. ECO stars freight recognition) measures.

The Council is not the Highway Authority, therefore various measures and resources needed within the AQAP are highly dependent on Kent County Council (KCC) involvement. An integrated approach with both internal and external partners is required. For example; aligning the Transport Strategy and Swale Freight Management Plan (2016) with the AQAP measures is essential. In addition, the new Local Plan will include an air quality policy.

It will be difficult for the Council to be able to materially influence the number of vehicles using the road network in the Borough and surrounding area until there is a change in government policy. However, the Council can work to try and achieve this in partnership with KCC (as the Highway Authority) by focusing on measures such as

improved infrastructure for electric vehicles, alternative modes of transport to support modal shift, and introducing vehicle weight limits to move large, more polluting vehicles away from sensitive area.

Issue 12: The vulnerability of heritage in the Borough that is currently either unrecognized or not formally designated.

Response: The scope for harm to occur in this respect will be limited by the proposed actions of the Borough Council and County Council moving forward (see responses in relation to issues 6 and 8. Gaining an early and deep understanding of the heritage significance of any given heritage asset will be critical to developing measures to manage the long term conservation of it.

Issue 13: The untapped potential of the Borough's heritage to provide a wide range of benefits.

Response: This is something that is touched on in the Council's Swale Visitor Economy Framework but it is also very clear from a quick look at the wide range of heritage that the Borough has to offer, that much of it is little recognized by a wider audience, and partly as a result of this, it is undervalued and inadequately understood. A key example of this is the group of listed buildings and structures at Sheerness Port, a number of which are graded at the higher grade I and II* level (i.e. a notch above the lower and more typical grade II listing status). The grade I listed Boat Store is considered to be of international heritage significance principally because of the pioneering form of its iron-framed construction which helped pave the way for the skyscraper buildings of the late 19th and early 20th Century, and yet even within the Borough itself, many people are unaware of its existence.

As part of its public commitment to protecting the Borough's precious and irreplaceable heritage, the Council will therefore seek to work with a wide range of local and national groups in raising awareness of, and championing the special qualities of its wide ranging heritage assets from the most modest structure, such as the grade II listed boundary marker stone at Faversham Recreation Ground, to the special townscapes and landscapes of places such as the former Royal Naval Dockyard at Sheerness Port, the historic core of Faversham, Sittingbourne High Street, Syndale's parkland landscape, and the Kent downland landscape around conservation villages such as Thowley Forstal. Chapter 5 (section 5.2) of this Heritage Strategy sets out the role that heritage can play in providing a wide range of benefits including economic and social regeneration, providing/restoring a sense of place and civic pride, community activity and celebration, boosting the strength of the local economy, providing opportunities for learning and improved health and well-being.



6. Artist's illustration of repaired and re-purposed Sheerness Dockyard Church – Heritage at Risk Grade II* listed building. Image provided courtesy of Hugh Broughton Architects with Martin Ashley Architects

2. Our vision, priorities and strategy strands A, B and C

2.1 Our Vision

The Council's vision and priorities for the positive management of the Borough's heritage were in part identified through some early engagement with local stakeholders in the development of the first draft version of the heritage strategy. However, given that this strategy is intended to be as much for the residents and businesses in the Borough, as it is for the Council itself, views on the overarching framework for the heritage strategy, were actively sought during the public consultation period. The vision as set out below was widely supported so has been retained unchanged. Whilst the 5 priorities proposed in the public consultation draft were generally well supported, there were constructive suggestions received for some changes to each one, and so these have been incorporated into the set of priorities shown below.

OUR VISION: *A vibrant and widely-known heritage which is valued for its own sake and for the long term benefits it provides to the people, economy and environment of the Borough of Swale.*

2.2 Our Priorities and Strategy Strands

OUR PRIORITIES:

1. To conserve, and where possible enhance Swale's heritage buildings, structures and areas and moveable/portable heritage as a cultural, economic, community and environmental asset to the area, in particular by positively managing the Council's own heritage assets, and by establishing a programme for the review and appraisal of Swale's conservation areas;
2. To make use of the borough's heritage to help achieve and promote sustainable and inclusive growth and regeneration, social and economic wellbeing, and civic pride, in particular by actions to tackle and specifically reduce Swale's heritage at risk across the full range of nationally and locally designated heritage assets;
3. To recognise and promote the role of Swale's heritage in creating or enhancing local distinctiveness and a positive image for the area as a place to live, learn, work and visit, in particular by the Council continuing to work in an enabling role to develop and support projects and initiatives by local groups, societies and businesses that would bring about significant public benefit.
4. To ensure Swale's heritage forms an integral part of local strategies and initiatives to promote tourism and the visitor economy, including through the conservation and subsequent positive management of the Borough's internationally significant maritime heritage (at Sheerness Dockyard) and aviation heritage (at Eastchurch) on the Isle of Sheppey;
5. Raising the historic environment (and the important social history associated with

it) up the agenda by promoting awareness and understanding of Swale’s heritage among local residents, businesses and visitors to the area, in particular to help realise the cultural, educational and associated health benefits it can offer.

The five priorities will be considered and addressed through the following strategy strands:

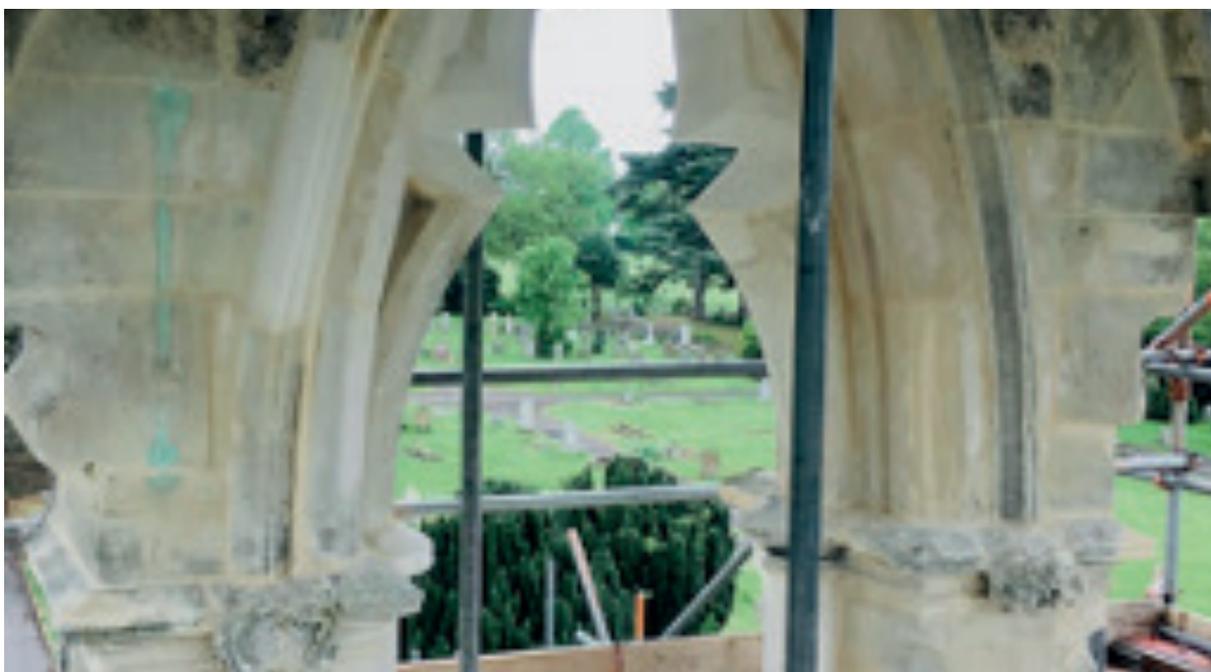
A: Understanding and Designation (Our heritage: its significance);

B: Positive Management and Intervention (Our heritage: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats); and

C: Capitalising and Championing (Our heritage: valuing it and fulfilling its potential).

2.3 How will this translate into actions?

The Action Plans deriving from this Heritage Strategy indicate how the proposed actions, set out therein, are linked to the priorities and underlying strategy strands in this Heritage Strategy document. The initial 3-year Action Plan for 2020 – 2023 is provided as **Appendix I**. The actions, which collectively comprise a mixture of appraisal, research, planning and physical works will be carried out by the Council and/or its project/initiative partner(s) (or their appointed consultants or contractors) to meet the objective(s) set out in outline in the relevant Action Plan entry and in accordance with a more detailed brief agreed at the inception of the individual project/initiative. The timeframe for the carrying out of the relevant work will as far as possible be broadly in line with the timeframe indicator shown in the relevant Action Plan document.



7. Partially rebuilt Belcote – part of a grade II listed building at the Council’s Bell Road Cemetery

The Council invested significant sums of money to repair and stabilize the belcote stonework to the cemetery chapel so that this well-loved characterful historic building could continue to provide an important community facility for the residents of the Sittingbourne area. The chapel at the Bell Road Cemetery is back in use again and further improvements to the building are planned as and when resources permit.

3. Our Heritage: its Significance (Heritage Strategy Strand A: Understanding & Designation)

3.1 Heritage Strategy Priorities Aligning with Theme A

The Heritage Strategy Priorities which principally align with this Strategy strand are:

Priority 1: To conserve, and where possible enhance Swale's heritage buildings, structures and areas and moveable/portable heritage as a cultural, economic, community and environmental asset to the area, in particular by positively managing the Council's own heritage assets, and by establishing a programme for the review and appraisal of Swale's conservation areas;

Priority 5: Raising the historic environment (and the important social history associated with it) up the agenda by promoting awareness and understanding of Swale's heritage among local residents, businesses and visitors to the area, in particular to help realise the cultural, educational and associated health benefits it can offer.

3.2 The story of our borough: Setting the scene

The borough is named after the narrow navigation channel called The Swale. This separates the mainland of Kent from the Isle of Sheppey, and it occupies the central part of the borough.

The borough was formed in 1974 under the Local Government Act 1972, from the Borough of Faversham; the Borough of Queenborough-in-Sheppey (which covered the whole of the Isle of Sheppey), the Sittingbourne and Milton Urban District, and Swale Rural District.

The ancient trackway route of Watling Street, passes through the area, and the modern A2 main road, largely overlies this route which was paved by the Romans. The historic settlements that developed along the length of Watling Street, including Boughton-under-Blean, Faversham, Newington and Sittingbourne, are now by-passed by the M2 Motorway, which was constructed in the early 1960s.

Apart from the urban concentrations around Sheerness and Minster in the northwestern part of the Isle of Sheppey, and those focused on the two mainland towns of Faversham and Sittingbourne, it is a predominantly rural borough, containing a high proportion of the UK's apple, pear, cherry and plum orchards within an area of the county known as the North Kent Fruit Belt, and also containing many of Kent's remaining hop gardens.

Whilst the Borough is home to many businesses, some of regional and even national stature (Sittingbourne and the Isle of Sheppey forms the southeastern most parts of the Thames Gateway growth area, set up in the early years of Tony Blair's Labour government), the perception of the Swale area to many visitors today is of a lightly industrialised area heavily dominated by agricultural and horticultural activity. However,

this belies the significant industrial activity that has taken place in the area over several hundred years, and has shaped the form and development of settlements in the area, along with the key factors of the area's direct access to the Thames Estuary, and the coming of the railway in 1859.

Telltale signs of these former industrial and some other types of activity can still be seen in the landscape along with remnant structures and buildings at some locations in the Borough and we will build on this background in the heritage theme sections of this chapter, starting at section 3.5.

In landscape terms, most of the southern half of the borough lies within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) i.e. rolling, hilly landscape, heavily wooded in places, although the largest concentration of woodland lies at the eastern edge of the borough, where the large ancient woodland of The Blean provides one of most ecologically and archaeologically rich areas of the borough. The northern edge of the mainland and the southern edge of Sheppey consists of marshland, much of it still undrained and largely still natural in form. On the mainland, the wide band of land lying between the Kent Downs and the marshes is generally relatively flat, well drained and fertile as is the case for much of the land north of the Sheppey Marshes, and this to a large degree broadly distinguishes the different landscape characters of the Borough and the different types of countryside activities we still see taking place within them today.

The combination of Swale's industrial past interlocking with its farming and coastal fringe landscapes is arguably one of, if not the major factor that makes Swales heritage unusual and special.



8. Part of the Blean Ancient Woodland, nr Dunkirk

3.3 An introduction to heritage designations

Some of the physical heritage that we see around us, such as buildings, structures, or groups of buildings and spaces, is formally recognized as being special in some way by the process of designation. Such designation takes place at either the national level or at the local level and the following table (forming Figure 1.) sets out the different types of designations for the different types of heritage, and which body is responsible for making the designation. It should be noted that this table does not include the different types of natural heritage designations (such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) and it also includes some types of designation that are not found within Swale Borough. The table is laid out showing the designations in the order of importance from a national planning policy perspective, but the Council, along with Historic England and Kent County Council recognizes that it is sometimes heritage which is not formally recognized at all, or only recognized at a local level which can be the most precious to particular individuals, groups and communities, etc.

Designation Type	Example	Designating Body	Designation Grade (if applicable) ¹	List Entry ID No. (if applicable) ²
1. World Heritage Site ³	Canterbury Cathedral	UNESCO ⁴	N/A	1000093
2. Scheduled Monument ⁵	Queenborough Castle earthwork mound (Swale)	Secretary of State for Department of Culture Media & Sport (on recommendation of Historic England)	N/A	1007465
3. Listed Building ⁵	Lynsted Court (Swale)	(as above)	Grade I	1069274
4. Registered Park & Garden ⁵	Doddington Place (Swale)	(as above)	Grade II	1000398
5. Registered Battlefield ⁵	Battle of Hastings 1066	(as above)	N/A	1000026
6. Protected Wreck Site ⁵	Bronze Age Ship at Langdon Bay, off Dover	(as above)	N/A	1000059
7. Conservation Area ⁶	Boughton Street (Swale)	Any Local Planning Authority	N/A	N/A
8. Local List ⁷	N/A (at present)	Any Local Planning Authority	N/A	N/A (at present)
9. Area of High Townscape Value (AHTC) ⁸	Sittingbourne AHTC	Swale Borough Council	N/A	N/A

Figure 1: Heritage designations table

Explanatory Notes/Further Information:

1. Listing and **Listed Building** designation marks and celebrates a building or structure's special architectural and historic interest, and also brings it under the consideration of the planning system, so that it can be protected for future generations. The older a building is, and the fewer the surviving examples of its kind, the more likely it is to be listed.

The **'Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England'** is focused on gardens, grounds and other planned open spaces (such as town squares). The emphasis is on designed landscapes rather than on planting or botanical importance. Designation takes place because historic parks and gardens are a fragile and finite resource. They can easily be damaged beyond repair or lost forever, so there is a need to protect them through the planning system. Listed buildings and Registered

Parks & Gardens have gradings to indicate the level of heritage importance attributed to them. There are 3 levels: grade I (heritage assets of exceptional interest); grade II* (heritage assets of more than special interest); and grade II (heritage assets of special interest). Grade I and II* list entries (see below) make up less than 10% of the total list amount of these types of heritage assets. For more information, please visit the relevant web page on the Historic England website. See:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/listed-buildings/> and

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/registered-parks-and-gardens/>

For information on curtilage listed buildings, please see section 3.16 of this document.

2. The List Entry ID No. relates to heritage assets listed on the National Heritage List for England (NHLE) which is provided by Historic England. The first six types of heritage asset on the table above are all included on the NHLE, and if you know the List Entry ID No, you can find the list entry information about any particular heritage asset simply by typing the ID No. into the search box on Historic England's Search the NHLE web page. You can also use this search facility to e.g. view all the heritage types in a particular local authority area and/or of a particular listing grade by using the advanced search feature. See: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>

3 & 4. **World Heritage** is the designation for places on Earth that are of outstanding universal value to humanity and as such, have been inscribed on the World Heritage List to be protected for future generations to appreciate and enjoy. Places as diverse and unique as the Pyramids of Egypt, the Great Barrier Reef in Australia, Galápagos Islands in Ecuador, the Taj Mahal in India, the Grand Canyon in the USA, or the Acropolis in Greece are examples of the 1007 natural and cultural places inscribed on the World Heritage List to date. The nearest World Heritage Site to Swale Borough is in neighbouring Canterbury District, where the combined grouping of Canterbury Cathedral, St. Augustine's Abbey and St. Martin's Church was inscribed in 1988. World Heritage Sites are designated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). You can find out more about UNESCO and this type of designation (including a list of all the world heritage sites) by visiting the UNESCO website. See: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/about/>

5. Heritage asset types 2 – 6 from the table are all designated by the Secretary of State for the Department of Culture, Media and Sport on the recommendation of Historic England, which is the government agency responsible for advising the government on all matters relating to heritage, excepting the content of museums and moveable/portable heritage such as historic planes, boats and trains. **Scheduling** represents the highest form of heritage designation and related protection, and proposals to alter **scheduled monuments** are therefore determined by the aforementioned Secretary of State on the recommendation of Historic England. Scheduling is a designation applied only to sites of national importance, and is only applied to deliberately created structures, features and remains. Scheduled monuments are not always ancient, or visible above ground, and they range from pre-historic standing stones and burial mounds, through to many types of medieval sites (castles, monasteries, abandoned farmsteads and villages), to the more recent result of human activity such as collieries and military defence structures. **Registered Battlefields** and **Protected Wreck Sites**

are not found within or off the coast of Swale Borough, although there are examples of these types of heritage asset not far away, as per the examples cited in the table. For more information on all these heritage types (2 – 6), (including selection criteria and how to apply for a heritage asset to be considered for listing or scheduling) please see the following web pages from the Historic England website:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/apply-for-listing/>

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/scheduled-monuments/>

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/listed-buildings/>

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/registered-parks-and-gardens/>

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/registered-battlefields/>

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/protected-wreck-sites/>

6. Conservation Areas are designated by Local Planning Authorities such as Swale Borough Council, but using guidance on appraisal, designation and subsequent management provided by Historic England. See:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/local/conservation-areas/>

Conservation areas exist to manage and protect the special architectural and historic interest of a place - in other words, the features that make it unique. Conservation Areas vary hugely in size, character and form, but typically include groups of buildings of a special and readily notable character along with the spaces (formal and/or informal e.g. parks, squares, avenues, private gardens and alleyways, etc) that contribute to the overall special character of the defined area. Every local authority in England has at least one conservation area and there are now over 10,000 in England. At the time of writing, Swale Borough has 50 Conservation Areas and you can find out more about them by visiting the Conservation Areas web pages of the Borough Council and Historic England. See:

<https://www.swale.gov.uk/conservation-areas/>

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/local/conservation-areas/>

7. The Council does not current have a Local List (of buildings, structures, sites or features of local heritage interest), but this is something which it is giving priority to developing as an early action in the initial Heritage Strategy Action Plan. The current coverage of such lists across England is (at the time of writing) quite patchy, and whilst there are some good examples of this type of local designation, there are also some in place that are either dated, limited in their coverage (e.g. not district/borough-wide) and of limited value for one reason or another e.g. lack of any supporting Local Plan policy and/or community support. The Council is therefore determined to ensure that the Local List it develops in partnership with the town and parish councils, local amenity groups/societies and the relevant property/landowners is robust and easily accessible in form, widely supported, and regularly reviewed to ensure it would maintain its value in assisting with the conservation of the Borough's heritage. The Council will make use of the guidance provided by Historic England in developing its own Borough-wide Local List. See: **<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/local/local-designations/>**

8. The Area of High Townscape Value designation is specific to Swale Borough,

although some other Local Planning Authorities have a similar type, and in some cases similarly named designation. Unlike Conservation Areas, Swale's Area of High Townscape Value imposes no additional planning controls, but it is supported by a policy in the current adopted Local Plan (Policy DM36), to help ensure that any new development requiring planning permission would be designed in such a way as to maintain or even improve the special townscape qualities that the area displays. There is currently only one such designated area in Swale Borough that consists primarily of Edwardian and Victorian buildings and parks cemeteries trees and open spaces marking an important period in the town's post industrial expansion. The area in question is located to the south of Sittingbourne High Street. However, further designations of this type may be considered in the future. More information on this designation, including a map of the only current designated area and illustration of it can be seen in Section 3.16 of this chapter.

Section 3.16 of this chapter sets out what Swale Borough contains in respect of the different designated heritage types referenced above, excepting the types of heritage that could be included on a Local List. Locally important heritage in a Swale Borough context is considered in the following Section, 3.17, and it should be noted from the outset that the bulk of heritage in the Borough while undesignated, can nevertheless in some cases contain a level of significance that matches that of designated heritage. As an example of this, the First World War defences on the Chatham Land Front and on the Isle of Sheppey are likely of regional and national importance. Even where not at that level of significance, the undesignated heritage provides a lot of the distinctive character of the Borough's places and it is recognized by the Council that this is highly valued by many local groups and communities.



9. WW1 Machine Gun Emplacement at Barnland Farm, Warden, Isle of Sheppey. One of a number of defences built to prevent invasion of the island and the important naval dockyard at Sheerness. Image provided courtesy of Simon Mason and the Defence of Swale Project.

3.4 An introduction to the key heritage themes of the Borough

The following 11 sections of this chapter (sections 3.5 to 3.15 inclusive) set out what the Council considers to be the types of heritage in the Borough which are not only special in their own right but very much serve to lend the Borough its unique character and contribute to its overall heritage appeal through the way they have shaped townscapes, landscapes and the local communities and traditions over time, generating many fascinating stories along the way, some of which are documented, but some of which only survive as memories and oral histories. In line with the concluding remarks of the previous section (3.3), much of the heritage referenced in the following part of this chapter is undesignated, but the chapter sections in question do not set out to distinguish between designated and undesignated heritage assets, but rather to provide a series of snapshots of the overall heritage picture for the Borough by focusing in on 11 broad key heritage themes.

There are so many different types of heritage within the Borough that the Council considered it was necessary to effectively divide them under these 11 broader grouped headings to make navigating this important element of the Heritage Strategy a little easier. It is accepted that there is overlapping of the heritage types between the themes, but this is inevitable to some degree, and the Council has sought to be as logical and clear as possible in the way it has set out this part of the Heritage Strategy.

The heritage themes (as set out in Figure 2 below) are not intended to provide a detailed analysis of each theme area including important considerations such as range and extent of relevant asset types, condition, distribution and vulnerability etc. The time needed to carry out the research to provide this level of detail has not been a realistically possible in the context of the Council's existing limited resource levels, and as such, each of the following heritage theme sections seeks to provide the essential flavour of each theme and will serve as the basis for a more detailed heritage theme topic paper, one of which is planned to be produced for all but the last year of this 12 year Heritage Strategy such that by the end of the Strategy plan period, the Council and other stakeholders should have a much clearer understanding and appreciation of the entire range of heritage within the Borough. Due to the particular vulnerability and typically poor level of understanding of this particular heritage type, the Council will be starting off this heritage theme topic paper series in 2020 with a paper on archaeology.

Heritage Theme	Chapter 3 Section
Aviation & defence heritage	3.5
Industrial heritage	3.6
Maritime and defence heritage	3.7
Agricultural, horticultural and rural heritage	3.8
Towns and high streets	3.9
Villages and hamlets	3.10
Churches, chapels and memorials	3.11
Historic landscapes	3.12
Archaeology	3.13
Museums, collections & archives (digital/traditional)	3.14
Portable/moveable heritage	3.15

Figure 2: Heritage Themes
Chapter 3 Section Headings

3.5 Aviation and defence heritage

Given the location of Swale Borough in England's county closest to mainland Europe and with a stretch of coastline overlooking the sea approach to Great Britain's capital, London, it's perhaps not surprising that the modern area of Swale Borough has played an important role in the defence of the realm for hundreds of years. It came to the fore in this respect during the 18th Century, when a naval dockyard and associated defence structures were constructed on the Isle of Sheppey at Sheerness to provide protection against potential attack and/or invasion by a foreign power. The Royal Naval Dockyard at Sheerness continued to develop in the 19th Century and the early part of the 20th Century before its Royal Naval function ceased in 1960, and it began to transform into a commercial port, known as Sheerness Port. The site today is not only characterised by the surviving Royal Naval Dockyard buildings and structures (many of which were designed by the notable early Victorian civil engineer, John Rennie), but also by the defences such as the fort at Garrison point, the Sheerness Defences, Fort Townshend (now gone but part recently found in archaeological remains) and the eventual long canal structure across the peninsula, the Queenborough Lines (see image below).

Most of the surviving buildings and structure are protected by scheduled monument, listed building and/or conservation area designation.



10. The Queenborough Lines moated defence structure (a Scheduled Monument).-

The Sheerness Dockyard Preservation Trust was set up following the combined efforts of the Council, the Spitalfields Trust and many individuals to save some of the historic buildings within the former Royal Naval Dockyard from a sad demise, most notable of these being the (twice fire-damaged) grade II* listed Dockyard Church. The Trust's focus today is on the repair and imaginative re-use of the classically inspired Georgian church, but as part of the plans for the re-use of the building, it is intended to be able to display section of John Rennie's large scale model of the Royal Naval Dockyard (covering 1600 sq. ft.) is currently temporarily housed by English Heritage in Portsmouth. You can read more about the Trust's project and the dockyard model by visiting the Trust's website. See: <https://sdpt.org.uk>

The Defence of Swale Project (a collaboration between Kent County Council, community volunteers and defence experts) has been instrumental in identifying and cataloging 20th Century defence heritage, in order to provide an overview of Swale's defence heritage in the wider context of the strategic role that Kent historically played in the defence of the nation. Please visit The Defence of Swale Project website for more information:

www.khdarchaeology.org.uk/2014/06/the-defence-of-Swale-project.

Whilst the Swale defences were one of many anti-invasion defence systems built around the east coast of England, what makes the defences in Swale special is the detailed record of them that survives. The National Archives has a collection of around 40 detailed maps of World War I sites and structures prepared by the Royal Engineers, in many cases including photographs and construction details.



11. Pill box set in wall of the Ship Inn, Ospringe (part of the grade II listed building). Image provided courtesy of Simon Mason.

The defences, forming part of the Chatham Land front, were designed to prevent a landing in the first instance, and then to counter the advance of any invading enemy troops towards the strategically important naval dockyards at Chatham and Sheerness. Key sites include communication trenches, batteries and artillery positions, pill boxes, and observation posts.

The Swale area played an important role in helping to defend Great Britain through the course of both world wars, and in respect of World

War II, a series of chain home radar stations built across the east coast of England and Scotland played a vital role in giving the nation early warning of invading enemy aircraft. One such station is the one that can still be seen today at Dunkirk near the eastern edge of the borough. Dunkirk is one of only five radar station sites to have retained any of their original towers, and the tower at Dunkirk (now used as part of the emergency services communications network, and by mobile phone operators) is one of the best preserved in-situ examples in England. The tower in question played a particularly significant role during the Battle of Britain.

Perhaps more surprising is the important role that the Swale area played in the early, pioneering development of aviation.

The training aerodrome at Eastchurch on the Isle of Sheppey, is one of just two sites in Britain where structures built in association with the early pioneers of powered flight have survived. In early 1909, brothers Hugh and Horace Short identified land between Leysdown and Shellness point on the Isle of Sheppey, as a suitable location for a flying base. Flying thereafter began at Eastchurch in July 1909, when C.R. Rolls used Standford Hill for tests of his glider, designed and built by the Short brothers at their nearby Leysdown works.

In 1910, encouraged by the owner of the site, Francis McClean, the brothers moved their operations to Eastchurch



12. Dunkirk Radar Tower (a scheduled monument and grade II listed building).

and built workshops, sheds for aeroplanes, and bungalows for the workforce. Rapid progress was made and Eastchurch became a fashionable centre for aviation pioneers.

Its military role began in 1910, when the Royal Aero Club began to give flying instruction to the Admiralty, and in 1912, Eastchurch was established as the Royal Flying Corps' Naval Wing HQ.

In addition to its key role in training naval pilots, the Eastchurch base became responsible for the air defence of the naval dockyards at Chatham and Sheerness. By the end of World War I, the Eastchurch base covered a 600 acres area and had a diverse range of 29 hangars.

During World War II, the base was used to mount raids on German occupied ports, until a series of severe targeted raids put the airfield largely out of action. This however didn't prevent it from becoming an unofficial landing ground for battle-damaged USAAF aircraft during 1943-44. After 1950, the airfield returned to its original agricultural use, whilst the buildings were converted into an open prison, which still operates today and is known as HMP Standford Hill.

A group of 4 steel framed aircraft hangars at the prison site still survive today, and these were given listed building status in 2005 but are in poor condition and in need of urgent attention. Other structures and buildings associated with aviation at this location still survive, whilst within the centre of Eastchurch village, a stone memorial to the aviation pioneers was unveiled in 1955, and is now also listed. The Eastchurch Aviation Museum plays an important role today in explaining and celebrating the important role of the Isle of Sheppey in the development of aviation, and the Council is committed to working with the museum to develop the internationally significant aviation history of Sheppey, and in particular to secure the conservation of the aircraft hangars. For more information on this, please visit the museum, and/or it's website. See:

<https://eastchurchaviationmuseum.org.uk>



13. Archive image of the Royal Aero Club hangars at Eastchurch (some of these hangars still survive and are now grade II listed buildings).



14. Aviators Memorial at Eastchurch (a grade II listed building). Image provided courtesy of Simon Mason.

3.6 Industrial heritage

The Swale area has a long history of industrial activity stretching back hundreds of years. The Swale area today is still recognized today for its brickmaking, papermaking and brewing industries, although it now only has one brickmaking plant, one papermaking plant, and one major brewery left. Another historically important industry in the area was gunpowder manufacturing.

Brickmaking

The sole, surviving brickmaking plant in Swale, is located at Sittingbourne. This continues to produce the popular Smeed Dean yellow stock bricks that have been used throughout London and across much of the southeast region of England for over 150 years. Other brickmaking plants were scattered across the northern mainland part of the borough area in areas with large and readily accessible pockets of brickearth. These were typically close to the coastline (e.g. Lower Halstow) or to the Roman road, Watling Street, and later, during the mid-Victorian era, to the Dover to Chatham railway line (e.g. Ospringe), to allow for quick transportation of the bricks to building sites across the region. The principal brickmaking areas were centred around Faversham and Sittingbourne with their respective Faversham and Milton Creeks where barges heavily laden with bricks leaving for London would have been a regular sight. The barges rarely returned empty and often their return loads consisted of construction waste that today can be seen in the sea defences of the Borough.

Faversham was for many years (in the late 19th and early 20th centuries) almost completely encircled by brickmaking plants, the last of which to cease operations, was the Cremer & Whiting plant at Ospringe which made both red and yellow stock bricks. The separate yellow and red stock brickmaking areas are in the process of being developed for housing, and once the scheme has been completed, you will be able to see the kiln chimney and clay wash plant retained and maintained as heritage features of the former redbrick making plant.



15. Retained brickmaking kiln chimney at former Ospringe brickworks site.



16. George Smeed – From an oil painting in Swale Borough Council Chamber.

The brickmaking plant at Sittingbourne was named after its original owner, George Smeed and his son in law George Hambrook Dean, who joined the business in 1875. In 1877, the plan produced over 60 million bricks and was the largest brick manufacturer in Great Britain. When Smeed died in 1881, he operated the largest brickmaking works in the world. His obituary in the Western Press hailed him as “the

making of Sittingbourne”. He left a personal estate of £160,000 and Dean succeeded him as head of the company. There are no remains of the early brickmaking operation left at the Sittingbourne plant today, as it was modernized in the 1920s. It is now owned by Wienerberger, but the many buildings in the borough built with bricks from the Sittingbourne, Faversham and other brickmaking plants in the Swale area stand as testament today to the hugely important role this industry once had. Furthermore, the quarrying of the brickearth deposits was so extensive, that it has left its mark on the Borough’s landscape and also on its early archaeological record where numerous discoveries were made including Palaeolithic finds, and Roman and Saxon sites within or on the brickearth.

Gunpowder manufacturing

Gunpowder works was historically another very significant industry in the Swale area with no less than 3 sites developed in and around Faversham. All 3 ceased manufacturing in 1934, but important surviving elements of the buildings and structures that supported this industry survive at all 3 locations, namely Home, Marsh and Oare, as well as at Faversham Creek.

The first gunpowder factories were small, near the town, and alongside the stream, between the London to Dover road (now the A2) and the head of the creek. By the early 18th Century, these had coalesced into a single plant, subsequently known as the Home Works, as it was the town’s first.

At this time the British government was buying its supplies from the private sector, but the quality was often poor, and in 1759 it decided it needed its own plant. Rather than build a new one, it effectively nationalised the Home Works, upgrading all the machinery in the process. From this phase dates the Chart Gunpowder Mill, the oldest of its kind in the world. This was thankfully rescued from the demolition, and then restored by the Faversham Society in 1966. It is now open to the public.

Nearby is Stonebridge Pond, today something of a picturesque beauty spot at the head of the Faversham Creek.

Historically however, it served to power some of the works’ watermills, slender remains of which survive. The pond still features a network of narrow-gauge canals along which powder was punted from process to process.

In the 1680s a second factory was started by Huguenot asylum-seekers alongside another stream about two kilometres west of the town. It had its own access to the sea via Oare Creek and so became known as the Oare Works. It became a leading supplier to the British East India Company.

The third and last gunpowder factory to open was the Marsh Works, built by the British government 1 kilometre northwest of the town to augment output at its Home Works; it opened in 1787.



17. The Proof House at the former Marsh Gunpowder Works awaiting repairs and restoration summer 2019 (a grade II listed heritage at risk building).

In the wake of the Napoleonic Wars, the government leased its Faversham works back to the private sector - the Home Works in 1816 and the Marsh Works in 1834 - later selling them on in 1825 and 1854 respectively.

Explosives manufacture continued unabated at both sites under private ownership up to and beyond the Great War, but it should be noted that gunpowder from Faversham was not just used in warfare. It played a key part in the Industrial Revolution, e.g., by enabling routes to be blasted for canals and railways.

All three gunpowder factories shut in 1934. Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI), the then owners, sensed that war might break out again with Germany, and realised that Faversham would then become vulnerable to air attack or possibly invasion. They took the decision to transfer production, together with key staff and machinery, to the more remote Ardeer in Ayrshire, Scotland.

The site of the Marsh Gunpowder works transformed into a sand & gravel quarry following the plant's closure. Quarrying at the remaining operational part of the site only ceased in 2018 and this area is now beginning to be transformed into a new area of housing for Faversham, and one which will benefit from the Lakeland park area formed from previously worked areas. To the north of the planned area of new housing stands a cluster of buildings originally erected to form part of the gunpowder manufacturing process. All but two of these buildings (namely the Charge House and the Old Meals Room) are individually listed (along with the Gate House and Proof House) at the eastern entrance to the site. The Council is now working with the developer for the site (Anderson Group), their heritage and architectural advisers (Anthony Swaine Architecture Ltd) and other parties to transform this group of buildings into a heritage hub, and a real asset to the development and wider area.

It is important to note that the story of this industry does not finish with the closure of the 3 aforementioned gunpowder factories in 1934, but continues with later explosives works at Uplees and again at Faversham.



18. Artist's illustration of proposed heritage and cultural hub at site of former Marsh Gunpowder Works. Image provided courtesy of Anthony Swaine Architecture Ltd.

Papermaking

This industrial activity within the Swale area was concentrated in and around Sittingbourne. Paper manufacture started in Sittingbourne in 1708, when Peter Archer was first recorded as a paper-maker. Sittingbourne Paper Mill existed from circa 1769, but by 1820 had grown and was owned by Edward Smith. After newspaper editor turned publisher Edward Lloyd bought the factory in 1863, it burnt down later that same year!

Covering paper production from his London sites with longer shift production, Lloyd had the Sittingbourne paper mill rebuilt from 1863, but closer to the new railway to enable easier shipping of product to his newspaper presses in Bow, east London. After purchasing the Daily Chronicle in 1876, Lloyd installed new machinery capable of producing 1,300 square feet (120 sq. m) of paper per minute, and handed over

management of the site to his youngest son, Frederick. By 1882, the transfer of paper-making from London to Sittingbourne was complete, enabled by using esparto grass imported from Algeria and southern Spain via the creek port as a replacement for expensive cotton rag. The site then supplied all the newsprint to his presses in London. The site's production capability was expanded by converting the mill to steam power, and, after the death of his father in 1889, eldest son Frank introduced a horse-drawn tramway to carry materials from a new wharf at Milton Creek to the mill. As the mill expanded and silt built up in Milton Creek in the early 20th Century, the tramway was converted into a narrow gauge railway, to allow both ships and barges to offload pulp product at Ridham dock, for onward transport to the mill. On what is now known as the Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway, and open to the public as a heritage attraction with leisure rides along the part of the rail line, the first of three steam locomotives came into operation in 1906.



19. Working locomotive 'Superb' on the Sittingbourne and Kemsley Light Railway.

In 1910, United Newspapers was created to buy out Lloyd's newspapers, thenceforward separating it from the paper-making side which continued as Edward Lloyd Ltd. By 1912, the resultant investment made the Sittingbourne Paper Mill the largest producer of newsprint in the world, with 1200 employees using 17 machines to make over 2000 tonnes per week and supply the demands of Fleet Street.

Following a shortage of pulp in the early 1920s, from 1924 Frank Lloyd developed a new mill at Kemsley, together with a model village for its employees - this became the present-day Kemsley village. After his death in 1927, the renamed Lloyd Group was taken over by Sir William Berry and his brother, who owned Allied Newspapers. In 1936, they then sold the mill to Eric Bowater to form the Bowater-Lloyd Group.

After both plants were acquired by Finnish based paper company Metsa Serla in 1998, the decision was made to close the Sittingbourne Mill in October 2006, with the last reel being produced on 23 January 2007. The Sittingbourne Paper Mill was subsequently demolished in 2010 and its site redeveloped as a retail park and housing. Nothing now remains of the mill but archaeological investigations at the site have recorded remains of the early paper industry and the workers houses that were cleared from the area in the 1950s.



20. The Kemsley Arms Public House (prior to its closure and deterioration – see baseline HAR register at Appendix II).

This area of Sittingbourne was once occupied by extensive workers housing, but little of it remains today. Even the Lion Inn which provided refreshment for the mill workers for many years no longer functions as a public house, and its conversion into full residential use along with the loss of the majestically scaled mill marked the end of an

era for many folk in the town, such that today, memories of this once intrinsic element of Sittingbourne are a particular focus on the town's social media groups and attract considerable public interest. Assets such as the social club and some of the older recreational facilities in the town also derive from this industry.

Happily, the later Kemsley Paper Mill still remains and continues to function to this day. In the 1920s, its 4 paper making machines were the largest in the world. These days, the mill has an annual production capacity of around 820,000 tonnes and is the second biggest recovered fibre-based paper operation in Europe. In 2008, DS Smith invested over £100m to purchase and rebuild Paper Mill No. 6 to make lightweight corrugated case material. Kemsley Mill also now produces Light Medium; the first recycled lightweight paper manufactured in the UK.



21. Archive image of the 1920's mill buildings at Kemsley Paper Mill. Image provided courtesy of D. S. Smith Kemsley paper Mill.

The original paper mill buildings at the Kemsley site are still used today and their striking brickwork form (principally made up of the locally made Smeed Dean yellow stock bricks) is readily noticeable amongst the later 20th and 21st Century buildings primarily built using modern cladding materials.

Brewing

The final key industrial activity which has historically taken place in the Swale area, and continues to do so to this day, is brewing. This is centred in Faversham, which is undoubtedly the most significant site in Kent in terms of the number of surviving brewery structures, with the extensive former Rigden's site to the east of Court Street and the still-operational Shepherd Neame Brewery almost opposite on the west side. The Shepherd Neame Brewery was founded in 1698, although it is known that brewing has been carried out on the site since at least 1570 and possibly as early as 1520.

Although many of the buildings are modern, much of the 19th century structure remains. As date stones attest, the Shepherd Neame brewhouse was built in 1864, when the firm was known as Shepherd & Mares. The central clock tower was built during the 1890s. The Millennium Brewhouse, an extension of the 1864 brewhouse that opened in 2000, includes two stained glass windows with beer and brewing motifs by Keith and Judy Hill of Staplehurst in Kent. The ornate office building on Court Street displays hop motif decoration on its facade. Its northern section, including the doorway, was built in 1869; it was extended in 1900 by altering the building immediately to the south in matching style. The entire combined building is listed grade II. The brewery still interestingly retains some old equipment, including two traditional oak and gunmetal mash tuns dating from 1914 and 1916, which are still in regular use; two steam engines also survive in working order, but are no longer used in the brewing process.

Rigden's Brewery in Faversham was acquired by Fremlin's in 1948, later passed to Whitbread's, and eventually closed in 1990. The whole site is listed in nine sections, all grade II apart from the grade II* listed offices, a 16th century house. Remaining buildings include the former maltings (which was converted to a Tesco supermarket in 1996) and

the brewhouse. The previous version of the Swale Borough Council Local Plan (from 2008) envisaged a mixed-use development of the entire Rigden's site with conversion of the buildings for new uses including housing and retail. Much of this has since taken place.

The Shepherd Neame brewery continues to play an important role in Faversham and the wider local economy. It is the largest employer in the town and its extensive pub arm employs a further significant number of people. The brewery used to own large tracts of land across Swale Borough used for hop growing but in recent years, has sold many of these off, and now largely buys in the raw materials it needs to make its own beers, and the beers it produces for some other major beer brands.



22. Shepherd Neame brewery complex, Faversham.
Image provided courtesy of Shepherd Neame.

These days, the two brewery complexes still continue to form impressive architectural compositions in the heart of Faversham, and are very much key features of the town's extensive conservation area – the largest urban conservation area in the Borough. Furthermore the activity and distinctive, largely pleasant smells created by the brewing process form a key part of this historic town's intrinsic character.

3.7 Maritime and transport heritage

Maritime and transport heritage in Swale overlaps to some degree with industrial, and aviation and defence heritage in rather the same way that elements of Swale's industrial heritage links to its, agricultural, horticultural and rural heritage, notably in respect of its brewing industry.

Barge traffic and boatbuilding

Much of Swale's maritime heritage is linked to the area's proximity to London and the significant trade that moved along the Thames Estuary by boat. Historically, the distinctive Thames Barges were used to carry a wide range of goods along the river, most notably bricks and paper from the Swale area, but also coal from the coalmines along the east coast of Kent.

The formerly separate settlement of Milton Regis (now a suburb of Sittingbourne) developed from a Saxon royal estate at the head of the creek leading into Swale, and because of the extent of shipping trade it was able to engage in, it was larger and more important than Sittingbourne (a stopping point in the journey by road to the channel ports) until the creek started silting up, the Dover to Chatham Railway line arrived, and fortunes effectively reversed.

Some of the quays and wharfs which serviced this river trade still survive today, along with some of the warehouse, office and maltings buildings that enabled their effective operation. Most of these buildings have now been converted into other uses, and the quays now mostly provide moorings for small numbers of leisure craft and a quiet spot

for local anglers, but the former working character of some of these quays and wharfs can still be appreciated to some degree, perhaps most notably at Standard Quay and Iron Wharf in Faversham, where the quayside form remains little altered, and the grouping of quayside buildings (warehouses and the home of a nearby shipyard owner and possible former mayor of the town) have been retained, and have, or are in the process of being sensitively converted into new uses.

At the Milton Regis Creek (known as Milton Creek), an important heritage feature on the edge of the Milton Country Park (created and operated by the Council in the area of the Church Marshes – historically used for boatbuilding and gravel extraction for brickmaking) is the Dolphin Barge Museum. The sailing vessel being restored at this site is the Thames Sailing Barge, Raybel, originally made and launched at Milton Creek in 1920. Raybel Charters is working to return her to cargo delivery operation under sail; and to manage this barge as a newly revitalised heritage asset for community benefit.

Boatbuilding was historically an important industry in the Swale area for hundreds of years, not just at Milton Regis (where the principal focus was on barges), but also at Faversham, Oare, Queenborough and Sheerness, and fortunately there is still a good degree of surviving evidence for this: the quays at Milton Creek, Faversham and Lower Halstow; working barges and repair of barges; and the wealth of old hulks that can be seen in the creeks and marshlands of Swale. Furthermore, the importance of the creeks for transport and the links to the main London to coast road from Roman times is well evidenced in the rich archaeological record of Swale. There is sadly little of substance now left of this once important local industry except for some limited restoration work on existing craft, including that referred to above.

Cinque Port

It should not be forgotten that Faversham was historically a ‘limb town’ of Dover – one of the five Cinque Ports in Kent and Sussex. The Confederation of Cinque Ports is a historic series of coastal towns in Kent, Sussex and Essex. It was originally formed for military and trade purposes, but is now entirely ceremonial. The ports lie at the eastern end of the English Channel because this is, where the crossing to the continent is narrowest.

The origins of the Cinque Ports can be traced back to Anglo-Saxon times, when certain southeastern ports were granted the local profits of justice in return for providing ships. By 1100, the term Cinque Ports had come into use; and in 1155 a Royal Charter established the ports to maintain ships ready for The Crown in case of need. The chief obligation laid upon the ports, as a corporate duty, was to provide 57 ships for 15 days’ service to the king annually, each port fulfilling a proportion of the whole duty. In return the towns received the following privileges:

Exemption from tax and tolls; self-government; permission to levy tolls, punishment of those who shed blood or flee justice, punishment of minor offences, detention and execution of criminals both inside and outside the port’s jurisdiction, and punishment of breaches of the peace; and possession of lost goods that remain unclaimed after a year, goods thrown overboard, and floating wreckage.

Faversham was added as a ‘limb port’ to Dover in the 15th Century, but by the reign of Queen Elizabeth I (1558 to 1603), the Cinque Ports had ceased to be of any real significance and were absorbed into the general administration of the Realm.

Around the coat of arms on the Faversham Common Seal is the Latin inscription Regis

ut arma rego libera portus ego, meaning since I (Faversham) bear arms for the King without charge, I am a free port. This is a reference to the town's corporate membership of the Confederation of Cinque Ports

Bridges and ferries

The Isle of Sheppey is one of the parts of Swale Borough that helps to make it very distinct in geographical terms, and its name is derived from the Old English work Scepig, meaning Sheep Island. Historically it was in fact three islands (Sheppey itself, Harty to the southeast, and Elmley to the southwest), but the water channels between the islands silted up many years ago to make one continuous island, named after the largest previously separate landmass.



23. The Faversham Common Seal

Sheppey was separated from mainland Kent until 1860 when the first of the island's bridges (the Kingsferry Bridge) was built, taking both road and rail. This earliest (static form) bridge was replaced in 1906 with one having a rolling lift design, initially operated by hand, and later by electricity. This in turn was replaced in 1959 by the current Kingsferry Bridge with its distinctive paired set of reinforced concrete towers, which unlike the second bridge, allows it to lift both the road and the railway line to allow clearance for shipping heading to/from the commercial docks at Ridham (used for the transport of the area's important brickmaking and papermaking industries).

The current Kingsferry Bridge only carries a single carriageway of road traffic in each direction, and so with the need for the island to help cater for housing and employment growth towards the end of the 20th Century and into the 21st Century, the decision was made to build a second bridge crossing. The Sheppey Crossing (as it was named) is a four-lane road bridge carrying the dualled A249 road, providing the island with a fast road link to Sittingbourne and further south to the M2 Motorway and the county town of Maidstone.

The Kingsferry Bridge, a combined road and rail vertical lift bridge (sometimes referred to as the transporter bridge) is not listed, but is a good example of 20th Century heritage yet to be fully appreciated.

Prior to the arrival of the first bridge, four separate ferries connected the island to mainland Kent: (1) the King's Ferry to Iwade, (2) the Harty Ferry to Faversham, (3) the Elmley Ferry, and (4) a passenger ferry connecting the island to the Port Victoria railway terminus on Kent's Grain Peninsula. The most recently active of these was the Harty Ferry, although this ceased to operate at the start of the First World War. These were by nature small scale operations and physical reminders of these ferry services are limited. However, the ferryman's house at Harty (which evolved into an inn) still stands and this grade II listed building with its impressive views over the Swale is now a popular location for weddings



24. The 1959 Kingsferry bridge with transporter platform raised. (a non-designated heritage asset)

and leisure craft sailors who make use of the inn's jetty.

The other surviving reminder of the island's former ferry services is the pier toll house at Sheerness for the ferry service to Grain. The associated pier (with its octagonal form waiting room at the pier end) was demolished when the commercial port at Sheerness was extended out westwards into the River Medway, but the little toll house survives along with the iron railings and cobbled street surfacing at the entrance to the former ferry pier. This modest little building is not currently listed and may not be of sufficient architectural or historic interest to warrant future listing by Historic England, but is certainly of significant local heritage interest.

Roads and pilgrims

The road network in the Swale area is an important contributor to the overall degree of heritage interest that Swale has to offer. This is primarily derived from the fact that the route of an ancient trackway cut across the heart of the area in a roughly east-west alignment. Watling Street as it became known from the Roman period linked London with the channel ports of Dover



25. *The Ferryman's Inn at Harty, Isle of Sheppey*
(a grade II listed building)

and Richborough. The Romans paved the route and it continued to be an important transport corridor for subsequent activity, with many sites established alongside it in Roman, Saxon, medieval and later periods, Archaeological evidence illustrates that. Some of these remains cannot be seen, but it is anticipated that there are further remains still to be discovered, and this will be considered more fully at section 3.13.

Watling Street is likely to have always been a busy route from the when it was first constructed, but in the medieval period, its degree of use, if it had ever in fact started to decline, increased again following the dramatic murder of Archbishop Thomas Becket at Canterbury Cathedral in 1170. The subsequent pilgrimage that developed in memory of Becket resulted in the increased development of inns along the Watling Street route (which passed through Canterbury on its way to Dover) and other developments including pilgrim hospitals.

The pilgrimage route from Southwark in London, to Canterbury was of course famously captured in the collection of stories known as *The Canterbury Tales*, written by the medieval poet and author, Geoffrey Chaucer, between 1387 and 1400, and published from the 15th Century onwards. Sittingbourne and Boughton are the only Swale Borough places mentioned in the *Tales*, and an illustrated map in the lych gate of Boughton Church quotes the relevant text (in Old English). At the tiny settlement of Tonge in Swale Borough is a small spring that feeds the mill pond just to the north of Watling Street. Following Thomas Becket's death in 1170, this stream became known as Becket's Stream and for many years, it was believed to have healing powers. As such, a medieval hospital was developed alongside the stream, and it is understood that the stream become a popular stopping point for pilgrims on their way to Canterbury. The stream, mill pond and some of the mill buildings can still be seen, but the site of the former hospital has long since been cleared, and it is no longer clear exactly where it stood, so this requires some investigation. The stream, mill pond and surviving mill buildings (all of which are listed) are nevertheless recognized for their heritage value and together make up the Tonge Conservation Area. It should be

noted that the mill buildings at Tonge were not associated with the pilgrimage to Canterbury. The Council plans to review this small conservation area early in 2020 as part of a series of events happening in 2020 to mark the passing of 850 years since the infamous murder of Thomas Becket. The intention is to provide some interpretation measures to help provide an understanding of the link between this area and Becket's shrine in Canterbury. The Council is also committed to exploring the ancient history of this site and the possibility of extending the area of the new country park at this location (on the eastern edge of the recently started Stones Farm housing development) to allow public access to the head of the stream.



26. Pier Toll House, Sheerness
(a non-designated heritage asset)

Various historians and history information sources have suggested that the former Tonge Castle was the site at which the ancient King of the Britons – Vortigern (c. 425), made a pact with the Saxon leaders Hengist and Horsa to protect his kingdom against the Picts and the Scots, rewarding them for their services with a grant of land. Subsequently the Britons made war on the Saxon newcomers (first established in Kent) and four battles were fought, the last of which led to Vortigern's son Vortemir (the Saxon's leading opponent) being slain.

According to some specialist historians, there are a number of locations within the modern Swale Borough area that feature in the epic Old English Poem, Beowulf, notably Tonge and parts of the Isle of Sheppey.

There were historically inns at all the settlements in the Swale area along the route of Watling Street, and many of these still exist today, although typically in a much enlarged and altered form. Many of these had stables and coach houses to cater for the horse drawn coaches that plied the route, although little in the way of this service infrastructure survives today, with most having been either demolished, or converted into additional accommodation space.

Many of the inns still survive and function as either inns or public houses, and the finest surviving example is without doubt the Red Lion Inn at the High Street in Sittingbourne. This listed building, located right in the middle of the Sittingbourne High Street Conservation Area, was the principal hotel of Sittingbourne until it was superseded by the (since demolished) Rose Inn. The current inn at the site now only operates from the east side of the carriage arch which leads you through to a rear courtyard, and a long low timber framed building that may previously have functioned as a stable range. It is known that there has been an inn at this site for over 600 years. In 1415, King Henry V was known to have been entertained here on his return from the Battle of Agincourt. Other famous customers include Cardinal Wolsey, King Henry VII, King Henry VIII and Emperor Charles V (ruler of both the Spanish Empire from 1516, and the Holy Roman Empire from 1519).



27. The Red Lion Inn,
Sittingbourne (a grade II listed
building)

Finally, no overview of the Swale area's marine and transport related heritage would be complete without consideration of the significant role that railways have played in the transformation of the area from the mid Victorian period.

Railways and growth of the area

The development of railways in Great Britain first started in the 1830s, with the majority of lines that were built by the different railway companies having a major terminus station in London. The Swale area was connected to the capital by The London, Chatham and Dover Railway, which began life as the East Kent Railway, and operated from 1859 until 1923, when it united with other companies in south east England, to form the Southern Railway. The Kent Past website has suggested that the coming of the railways turned fields into towns, whilst the absence of a railway connection to existing towns led to them remaining small and viewed as villages compared to many of the places which developed rapidly from the second half of the 19th Century well into the latter reaches of the 20th Century. It is certainly the case that the arrival of the railway in the Swale area at the dawn of the 1860s profoundly affected the manner in which the area evolved and certain settlements grew at the expense of others.



28. Queenborough Railway Station
(a non-designated heritage asset).

The London, Chatham and Dover Railway initially provided the Swale area with five stations, which from west to east were: (1) Newington, (2) Sittingbourne, (3) Teynham, (4) Faversham, and (5) Selling. A branch link between Sittingbourne and the Isle of Sheppey (with further stations being added at Queenborough and Sheerness was added in 1860, with the construction of the Kingsferry Bridge, which allowed a rail line to be carried over The Swale. The branch line between Sittingbourne and Sheerness was operated for a while by the nominally independent Sittingbourne and Sheerness Railway before being fully absorbed the London, Chatham and Dover Railway in 1876. The smaller stations of Kemsley and Swale were later added to this branch line in the 1920s, largely to serve the Kemsley Garden Village, built to provide dedicated homes for the second paper mill at Sittingbourne (in Kelmsley), as referenced in Section 3.5.

In 1876, Queenborough became a junction station with the opening of a short spur to Queenborough Pier to serve steam ship services. A second line was added on 1 August 1901 with the opening of the Sheppey Light Railway, an 8.75 miles (14.08 kilometres) line across the Isle of Sheppey to Leysdown. There was no direct connection with the Sheerness Line and trains for Leysdown departed from the outer face of a newly constructed island platform at Queenborough. An iron footbridge was erected at the southern end of the platforms to facilitate passengers changing between main line and branch services. Services on the Sheppey Light Railway ceased from the 4 December 1950. Traces of the former Sheppey Light Railway can still be seen, but there is no longer any trace of the pier serving the steam ship service at Queenborough left. Of the stations within the mainland part of Swale, the station at Faversham is by some way the most impressive in architectural terms, and this has been recognized by its designation as a listed building. Faversham Station, like Sittingbourne, also serves as a

junction station with the line through the town splitting east of the station to head northeast (leading on to Sandwich and Ramsgate) and southeast (leading beyond Swale's easternmost station of Selling), on towards Dover. The Council has recently supported the Faversham Society and the local MP in putting pressure on the rail service operator to initiate some overdue repair and restoration works. Further improvements are still needed, and the Council will continue to work with partners to push for these, as appropriate.

The railway infrastructure at Faversham has changed significantly over the years, and this has resulted in two listed railway buildings (referred to as the engine shed and carriage shed) effectively becoming separated from the remaining sidings at Faversham Station, and falling into disuse and decay. This heritage at risk scenario, and other heritage at risk scenarios for different types of buildings/structures is considered in sections 4.2 and 4.7 of this heritage strategy.

It can be seen that both Sittingbourne and Faversham (both of which were already home to significant industries) grew exponentially throughout the late Victorian period, through the Edwardian period and up to the beginning of the Second World War. The areas of Victorian and Edwardian housing that now partially surround the historic core of each town contribute substantially to their character, and this is recognized by Area of High Townscape Value and Conservation Area designation respectively.

The arrival of the railway resulted in the rapid expansion of Sittingbourne at the expense of Milton Regis, with the latter eventually becoming subsumed into the urban expansion of Sittingbourne as a northern suburb.

The villages of Newington and Teynham also expanded rapidly at the expense of coastal settlements including Upchurch, Lower Halstow and Conyer. The largely ribbon forms of Victorian housing stretching away from Newington and Teynham stations both form part of conservation areas at these two large villages today.



29. Tiled underpass feature at Faversham Railway Station (a grade II listed building).



30. The engine shed at Faversham Railway Station (a grade II listed heritage at risk listed building)



31. The modern replacement station and adjacent Victorian period housing at Newington

3.8 Agricultural, horticultural and rural heritage

Co-existing alongside some of the Swale area's early industries has been the long tradition in the area of fruit and hop growing. This is a strong tradition that continues to this day, although some of the areas historically used for fruit or hop growing have since been given over to the growing of vegetable or cereal crops, or developed for housing or employment use.

The north Kent Fruit Belt forms a distinctive landscape character within Swale Borough and it straddles the old Watling Street route through large parts of the borough.

Many of the traditional farm buildings associated with fruit or hop growing have been demolished following modernization of the fruit growing processes in the 20th Century, but enough still remain to help us understand how the early fruit and hop farms operated, and how important this type of activity has been in the Swale area for hundreds of years.

The most easily recognizable buildings in this respect are easily the oast houses (aka hop kilns) with their typical distinctive conical or pyramidal shaped roofs, topped by a movable cowl.

These buildings were designed for the kilning (drying) of hops as part of the brewing process, but with the mechanization of the hop-picking process, many oasts fell into disuse. Of those surviving subsequent demolition, many were converted into dwellings, with most of these conversions managing to retain some of the original building's character.

In the Swale area, there are many examples of converted oast houses, a significant number of which are listed.

Still functioning oast houses in Swale are now very rare, and consideration might need to be given to preserving and maintaining one in functional form to help retain a local understanding and appreciation of this key part of the area's agricultural heritage.

Closely associated with the oasts were the hop pickers huts, and there is a long history of the communities (many from parts of London) that flooded into the Swale area and used these huts to live in and work from, on a seasonal basis. There are plenty of cultural memories in this respect, some surviving through the typically vulnerable pickers huts that still survive, a number of which are located within Swale Borough. A good example of such pickers huts are those found at South Street, near Boughton-under-Blean. These have not been used for their original purpose for some time, but form an important and distinctive feature of the Boughton Church Conservation Area. Plans were approved in 2019 to convert them into holiday accommodation, essentially retaining much of their character.



32. Provender Oast near Lewson Street – one of many converted oast houses in Swale (this one a non-designated heritage asset).



33. The hop pickers huts at Boughton Church Conservation Area.

Apples, cherries, pears and plums are the principal fruit crops grown in the Swale area and the heritage of this, and that of fruit growing more widely in Great Britain is celebrated by the National Fruit Collection at Brogdale Farm, just south of Faversham. This site is important not only because of the story it tells about fruit growing in Kent and across Great Britain as a whole but also because it consists of a traditional grouping of Kentish farm buildings dating from the 18th Century, including the grade II listed Brogdale Farmhouse – a good example of a Kentish farmhouse in the fruit growing belt, from that period.



34. Brogdale Farm, Faversham, and the National Fruit Collection

The landscape character to the northern edge of the Swale area's mainland, and on the Isle of Sheppey is mostly dominated by low-lying marshland, and so where not drained and used as arable land, it is mostly left in its natural form and provides a significant wildlife habitat, particularly for birds and small mammals, including bats. The grazing of sheep and cattle in these low-lying marshy areas is common too, and as noted in 3.7, it was the prevalence of sheep grazing which gave the Isle of Sheppey its name.



35. Marshland landscape at Emley National Nature Reserve, Isle of Sheppey

To the south of the fruit belt area and south of the M2 Motorway the landscape form of the Swale area changes from a mostly gentle undulating topography to a more visually dramatic downland landscape. This is the northern edge of the range of low hills known as the Kent Downs, and its very special landscape character is recognized and protected by an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) designation that has been in place since 1969. Almost of the land area in Swale Borough south of the M2 Motorway forms part of the Kent Downs AONB, and the distinctive landscape form of the downs has given rise to a string of villages and hamlets in the Swale area that have a different feel to the settlements within, and north of the fruit belt.

Many of Swale's downland villages and hamlets have conservation areas which contain listed buildings, and typically many of those listed buildings consist of farmhouses or farm buildings, as is the case at Throwley Forstal, where the listed South Forstal Farmhouse and its barns form an intrinsic part of the village scene which forms the conservation area there.

The Kent Downs AONB (as with all other AONB's in England and Wales) has its own special organisation to help protect and promote the special qualities of the area and help ensure that the local authorities and others responsible for development in the AONB's manage this in a sensitive way. The Kent Downs AONB Unit has produced a range of guidance to help manage the area appropriately, and notable amongst this is the Kent Farmsteads Guidance, which was produced in 2014 in collaboration with

Historic England (then English Heritage), Kent County Council and the High Weald AONB Unit.

Traditional farmsteads and their buildings make a significant contribution to local character and distinctiveness in the Swale area, and beyond, through variations in their scale, layout, buildings and materials. In Swale, this can be readily appreciated by viewing some of the traditional Kentish farmsteads in the Swale area both within the downland and fruit belt areas of the borough.



36. South Forstal Farm – a key feature of Throwley Forstal (the farmhouse and barn are both grade II listed buildings)

The aforementioned guidance is supported by a catalogue of historic farmsteads that has been entered into the Kent Historic Environment Record and together, they help to enable a greater appreciation and understanding of the different types of farmsteads, and the types and forms of building which contribute to their distinctive characters.

3.9 Towns and high streets

The historical reasons for the development of Faversham and Sittingbourne have already been discussed at 3.6 and 3.7. This also references how the once important and separate settlement of Milton Regis became subsumed by Sittingbourne.

Swale Borough's other major town of Sheerness developed around the Royal Naval Dockyard and in part as a Victorian and Edwardian seaside resort, complete with the traditional leisure pier. Blue Town is a particularly fascinating part of Sheerness and is the area that was occupied by the dockyard workers and their families from the early 18th Century until the dockyard closed in 1960. It is also where the town was established (around the historic dockyard) before it expanded across the moated Sheerness defences to the newer areas of Mile Town and Marine Town, much of which was built under the direction of the prominent Victorian building and public works contractor, Sir Edward Banks in his business partnership with William Joliffe. Blue Town is named as such, as this was the colour of the surplus blue-grey naval paint used to paint the timber cabins the workers lived in. None of the cabins remain now and many of the other buildings forming the High Street of Blue Town outside the tall brick dockyard wall (constructed in 1827) had to be pulled down due to decay, but many fine buildings remain, a number of which are listed, and together they form a highly distinctive townscape cluster full of historic interest.



37. Queenborough Harbour

The smaller town of Queenborough initially developed as a planned medieval town alongside the castle built by King Edward III and this is still evident in the town plan today. The castle itself is long gone, but its mound forms a significant area of open space in the town and by virtue of its age and associated heritage interest, it is protected as a Scheduled Monument, and along with the town's Victorian era railway station, forms a key and distinctive feature at the eastern end of the town's conservation area.



38. Blue Town High Street scene.

Activities in the settlement, (which was granted royal borough status in 1338) focused heavily on fishing, boatbuilding wool-trading and some heavy industrial activity including glue and chemical production, and the harbour and associated creek that supported these activities is still very much the principal feature of the town at the heart of the Queenborough Conservation Area.

The town centres of each of the four Swale Borough Towns are all quite different in layout, scale and the variety/form of buildings and associated spaces to be found. However, a common feature to be found in all four towns is the traditional High Street, lined with the principal grouping of shops, public houses, inns, and in some cases

municipal buildings. Faversham is the odd one out here in that it's de-facto High Street is not actually named High Street, but is instead called Preston Street.

All of Swale's town centres contain high quality townscape and as such are all protected by conservation area status. Furthermore, many of the buildings in each town centre are of significant architectural or historic interest, and as such are listed. There is a particularly high concentration of listed buildings in the town centre area of Faversham.



39. Milton High Street, Milton Regis, Sittingbourne

Away from the high streets, each town has areas of townscape and/or landscape of appeal and varying degrees of heritage interest. Of particular note are the remains of the medieval streetscape at Abbey Road and Abbey Street in Faversham. Adjacent the standing remains of the medieval Royal Abbey of St, Savior (founded in 1147) can be seen the major and minor barns, stables and farmhouse that served as the farmstead to the Abbey, whilst in Abbey Street at Arden's House the remnants of the old gateway to the Abbey can be seen. All of this highly significant heritage is protected by a combination of scheduling, high grade listing and conservation area status.



40. Preston Street, Faversham



41. Abbey Farm, Faversham

3.10 Villages and hamlets

Away from the Borough's 3 principal towns of Sittingbourne, Faversham and Sheerness and the smaller town of Queenborough, there are multiple villages of varying size and form, and many hamlets, with each parish in the borough typically containing a village and a number of associated hamlets. The larger villages in the Borough (namely Boughton, Eastchurch, Iwade, Leysdown, Newington and Teynham) function as Rural Local Service Centres in planning policy terms and as such are planned for some limited housing growth to help support the retention and where possible expansion/improvement of local facilities. Irrespective of size however, many of the villages in the Borough and their associated hamlets are of some heritage interest and this is principally recognized through conservation area status, although it should be recognized that the lack of a conservation area does not imply that any given area has/retains no heritage interest.

A good example of a village and series of smaller hamlets with heritage interest can be found within the parish of Borden (immediately southwest of Sittingbourne). Here, the village of Borden itself has a quite extensive conservation area, whilst its associated hamlets of Chestnut Street, Harman's Corner and Hearts Delight each have their own smaller conservation area.

It is worth noting that many of the historic captains of industry made their homes within or close to some of the villages in Swale. Edward Banks (construction contractor giant of the Victorian era – see section 3.9) built his country home just outside the then hamlet of Halfway Houses on Sheppey, whilst George Smeed (of the Smeed Dean brickwork plant at Sittingbourne) built his mansion at what is now King George's Park in Tunstall – where he is also buried in style at the parish church.

Villages and hamlets with heritage interest can be found in all parts of the borough, although as referenced in 3.9, there is a higher concentration of villages with conservation area status in the downland landscape part of the borough, south of the M2 Motorway, where the bulk of the area is also designated as an AONB.

It is very much the case that the special landscape quality of this area contributes to the setting and associated character of many of these downland area conservation areas, and that in turn the notably special groupings of buildings and spaces (recognized through conservation area status) contribute positively to the overall landscape character and associated quality. However, this is not to say that the rural conservation areas outside the AONB do not benefit from a setting of strong landscape character, and in turn contribute to it, and it can be seen that this same mutual benefit applies in many cases, a good example of this being the Boughton Church Conservation Area.



42. Street scene from Borden (The Street) Conservation Area.



43. Boughton Parish Church with its attractive rolling landscape setting

3.11 Temples, churches, chapels and memorials

In many cases, the temples, churches and chapels represent some of the oldest buildings to be found in the Borough. They survive typically because of their robust masonry form (typically a mix of stone, stone & flint or brick & stone) and the high standard of construction skills and materials lavished on them as the focal point for worship, and many of them display different phases of development. The ranges in this respect vary considerably, but the churches and chapels in the Borough collectively display phasing that ranges from before the Roman occupation period through to the 21st Century. The vast majority are listed in their own right, or in the case of temple remains, scheduled, because of the highly significant architectural and/or historic interest they display. A large number of these buildings are also further protected and recognized for their heritage interest through their location within conservation areas. The small number of such buildings which are not protected by these designations are nevertheless of some heritage interest at a local level.

The earliest buildings of this type are now just buried or standing remains, such as the Romano-British mausoleum and subsequent church (believed to date from the Anglo Saxon period) at Stone-by-Faversham, which is today protected as a scheduled monument.



44. The scheduled 'Stone Chapel, nr Faversham.

The earliest church still in use for worship in the Borough is believed to be the medieval Church of St. Thomas The Apostle, at Harty Ferry Road on the Isle of Sheppey. The nave of this small, low grade II* listed church dates from the 11th or early 12th Century, and it displays phases of development in the late 14th/early 15th Century as well as the 19th and 20th Centuries. It is now very isolated and was listed in part because it represents one of the last vestiges of the medieval settlement of Harty, which as referenced in section 3.7 (under Bridges & Ferries) was once a small island in its own right.

Although other faith groups exist in the Borough, the buildings of heritage interest are at present limited to the Christian faith. The majority of these are now in the Anglican denomination, although some started out as Catholic churches and were effectively turned into Anglican churches following the reformation in the 16th Century, such as the grade I listed medieval parish church of Faversham, St. Mary of Charity, with its distinctive Corona spire.



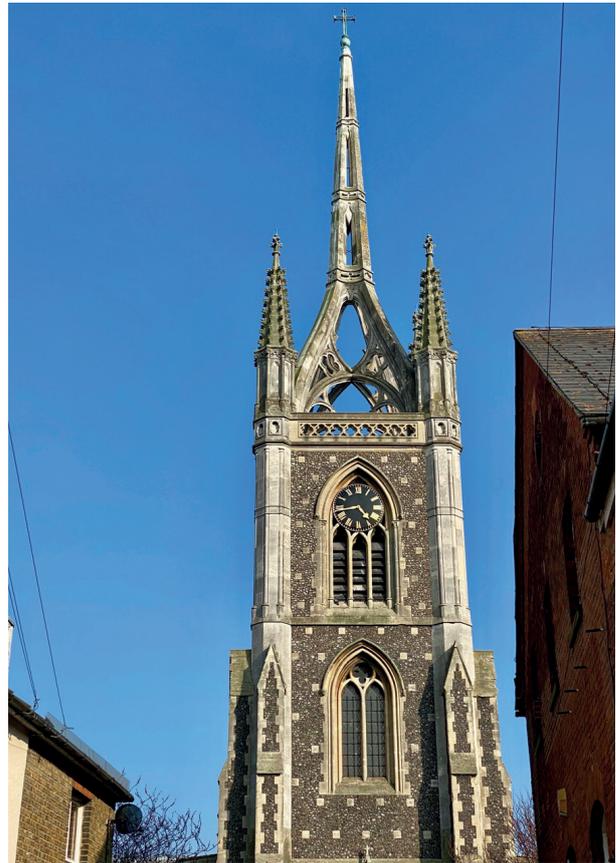
45. Church of St. Thomas the Apostle, Harty, Isle of Sheppey
(a Grade II* Listed Building)

Other Christian denominations with churches in the Borough that are of heritage interest include the Baptist, Methodist and United Reform Churches, with the different forms of worship used by the different Christian faith groups together with questions of scale often influencing whether the place of worship is referred to as a church or a chapel.

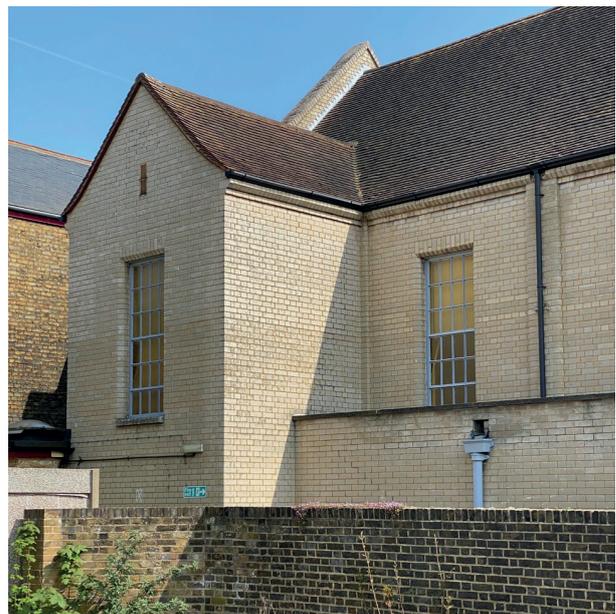
In the Borough's principal towns and in many of its villages, churches were for many years the heart of the community – a place where folks marked the different stages of life from birth through to death, as well as the changing of the seasons in chime with the Christian calendar.

Although many church congregations are dwindling in an age where consumerism, social media and the cult of the personality appear to be the new religions, churches in the Borough and elsewhere continue to serve an important community function and adaptations to churches to serve a wider range of functions (both faith-based and secular) and provide better facilities have in the main helped in this process without harming heritage interest. This is important as the heritage interest of churches can frequently lie as much if not more with the internal features, as it does with the exterior form. Examples of important internal features will vary depending on the type and scale of the church or chapel but will commonly include the nave and the altar. Many also have fine organs, rood screens and choir stalls. Churches are of course often noted for their fine stained glass windows, which are both an external and internal feature though normally designed to be best appreciated from the interior. Swale churches have many good examples in this respect, some of great antiquity, but many more dating from the Victorian period (when re-modelling of churches was common) and later, one such later example of particular interest being the 1955 stained glass window in All Saints Church at Eastchurch. This was dedicated to Charles Rolls and Cecil Grace – early pioneers of flight that flew their prototype planes from an airfield at Eastchurch.

It is important to recognize that alterations to churches still in use for worship (i.e. consecrated) fall outside of the scope of the secular planning controls operated by local planning authorities. Proposals in this respect (e.g. partial removal of pews and/or provision of kitchen/washroom facilities – which are perhaps the most typical) are dealt with by the relevant Diocese through something called the faculty process, with this division of control set in place many years ago, and



46. *The Corona Spire of the Church of St. Mary of Charity, Faversham (a Grade I Listed Building)*

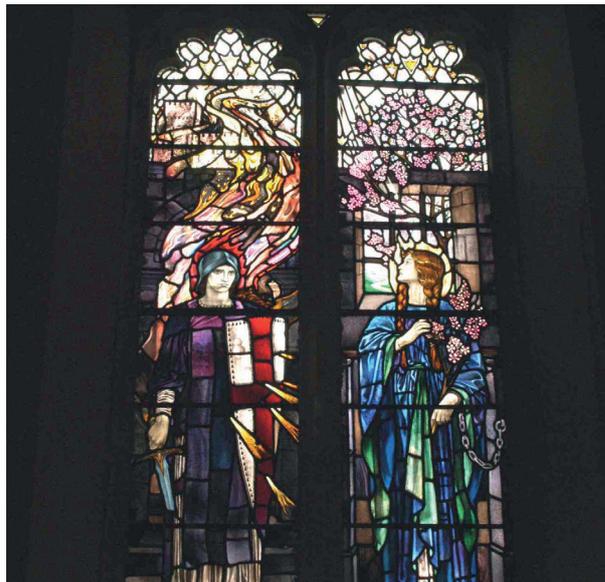


47. *The Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Sittingbourne (a non-designated heritage asset).*

today regulated by the Ecclesiastical Exemption Order 2010. More information on this and the heritage theme of churches, etc, more generally will be provided in a detailed topic paper to follow during the plan period of this strategy.

The majority of churches and chapels have churchyards attached to them, which in many cases form a strong and distinctive setting for the church building itself. Particularly in the rural areas where such churchyards are typically quite extensive and frequently enclosed by historic walls, these together with the grave stones, typical tree planting – Yew trees in particular – and monuments, form an attractive, open and peaceful place with a real patina of age, which are enjoyed by many for the peaceful enjoyment they provide. Unfortunately however, many of these churchyards (now closed to further burials) have suffered from a lack of adequate or appropriate maintenance over many years and the special qualities that they display are under threat, as is the actual fabric of the church buildings in some cases too. The Council is all too aware of this issue as many closed churchyards are allowed by law to be transferred from the relevant Diocese to the relevant local authority to manage/maintain, and Swale Borough Council has effectively inherited a lot of the closed churchyards in its area, which it is estimated come with a repairs bill of around £1.25 million.

When we think of memorials, most of us typically think of the various types of memorial structures erected across the country to remember and honour those who gave their lives in the two world wars. In Swale Borough as in most other districts, this represents the majority of memorials that we see, with many of these being located within, or just outside churchyards. However the wide variety of forms and material used together with the poignancy and often local social history that these structures display is what lends them appeal and heritage interest, even to those of us with no particular personal connection to any given memorial. The strong feelings that many folks have for such memorials and the memories associated with them were illustrated in recent years by the changes made to the setting of the grade II listed stone cross memorial (to the fallen soldiers of both



48. The 1955 stained glass window at All Saints Church, Eastchurch (a Grade I Listed Building) dedicated to Charles Rolls and Cecil Grace.



49. The churchyard wall to St. Michael in Sittingbourne (a Grade II* Listed Building) displaying a mix of disrepair and poor, past repairs.

world wars) in Faversham. The completed enhancement works have left the listed stone cross untouched, but created a stone wall of names of the fallen soldiers from the town together with new hard and soft landscaping features and new benches to enjoy the peaceful garden area by the cross. At the time, there was much vocal and written opposition to the planned changes as well much support. Now that the works are complete and starting to weather a little, it is hoped that the majority of local residents and regular visitors to the site will be pleased with the end result.



50. Faversham Stone Cross War Memorial
(a Grade II Listed Building)

There are two memorials which in helping to tell the history of the area, are of particular note, and both of which are listed in their own right. These are the Aviator Memorial at Eastchurch (see illustration and summary information about this on page 41 of this strategy document) and the mass grave memorial to the workers at the Faversham munitions factory whom were killed during an explosion at the factory in 1916. As the listing text states in relation to the reasons for designation, *'The grave is the final resting place of the majority of the victims of the worst accident in the 450-year history of the British explosives industry'*. The grade II* memorial can be found in the municipal cemetery at Love Lane in Faversham and forms a particularly poignant part of the concluding chapter in the long history of gunpowder and munitions manufacturing in and around the town.



51. Faversham Munitions Explosion Victims Memorial
(a Grade II* Listed Building)

3.12 Historic landscapes

As referenced elsewhere in this strategy document, the landscape we see in the Borough can tell us much about past activities and events at various points in time that have taken place, as well as of course indicating the current range of (principally rural and farming related) activities that we see today.

Some of these past activities or processes are industrial in nature such as the extraction of brick earth and the associated construction of kiln buildings and drying/storage sheds. Where the kilns (with their tall brick chimneys) and other processing/storage can no longer be seen in the landscape, the tell tale signs in the landscape are the reduced ground levels where the brick earth has been extracted, and this intervention to the landscape form can be seen in many parts of the



52. Oare Creek at its confluence with Faversham Creek, showing the remains of a barge buried in the creek bed.

Borough, but perhaps most notably around the edges of Faversham. Faversham would look entirely different to the way it does now if it hadn't been for the brickfields and the brickmaking that went with it. There are of course other types of extraction works that have taken place within the Swale area and it can be seen that some extraction continues to this day to help meet the needs of the construction industry. Historically, chalk was an important material needed for a number of process, but notably in the production of lime, used for mortar. Many old hollows in the landscape can still be seen, and at the Finch Drive area of the 1980s housing estate at Preston-next-Faversham, the housing has been quite well integrated into the excavated area of land formerly used for chalk extraction and associated lime manufacture.

In terms of other historic landscapes created by former industrial activities and processes, we can look at the creeks where it is easy to find abandoned and sometimes crumbling wharf structures, together with the remains of the barges and other types of vessels that historically moored up at these wharfs. We can also see cuttings in the landscape where railway lines were laid and later abandoned, such as on Sheppey where the bed of the old Sheppey Light Railway can now be walked from Power Station Road to Scapsgate Road as a result of a successful claim to it to be added to the Definitive Map as a public footpath (ZS 55).

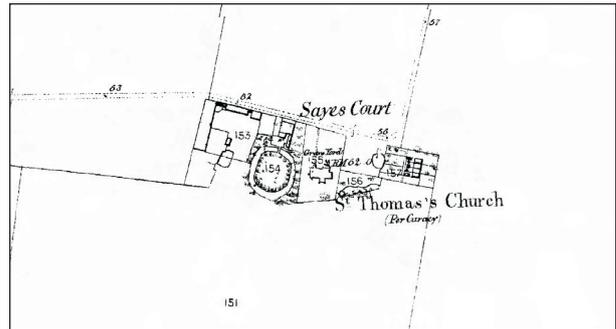
Perhaps the most striking historic landscape created by past industrial processes is the series of waterways at Stonebridge Pond in Faversham. The reservoir of water here was



53. Aerial and street level images of Stonebridge Pond, Faversham (and the associated surviving waterways). Map data ©2019 Google

not only used to work the gunpowder mills, but the associated network of waterways that were created also provided the means of moving unfinished powder by punt safely between the various processes of corning, pressing, dusting and packing.

It is safe to say that Swale Borough today represents a beautiful and remarkable example of a post-industrial landscape that has recovered to a very great extent from the ravages wrought on it during the 19th and early 20th centuries by the various industries that active there. However, many still recognizable historic landscapes are pre-industrial and stem from the medieval period or even earlier. Reference has already been made (in section 3.9) to the remnants of the medieval streetscape on the northern fringes of Faversham at Abbey Farm, and to the remains of the medieval settlement at Harty on the Isle of Sheppey. Adjacent the medieval church of St. Thomas the Apostle at Harty, are the remains of the medieval moat around Sayes Court, which is scheduled for its significant heritage interest and which in its heyday would have been an impressive landscape feature within the medieval settlement, likely designed to display wealth and prestige rather than to perform any serious defensive role.



54. Sayes Court moat, Isle of Sheppey. From the first edition O.S. mapping sheet

Away from the settlements, the rural landscape displays the remains of farmsteads, enclosures and field ditches, woodland management features and the routes and trackways that have shaped the settlement pattern in the Borough we see today. This is particularly notable in the area of The Blean Ancient Woodland to the east of the Borough. Areas of Ancient Woodland have, by definition, remained undisturbed since at least 1600AD. It therefore follows that this area is also rich in archeological remains because of the limited impact that activities have had on the ground levels. The Battle of Bossenden Woods (an area within The Blean) is said to be the last battle which took place on English soil, and the scene of this event can be accessed by permissible footpaths, although there is at present no sign or memorial to mark the site.

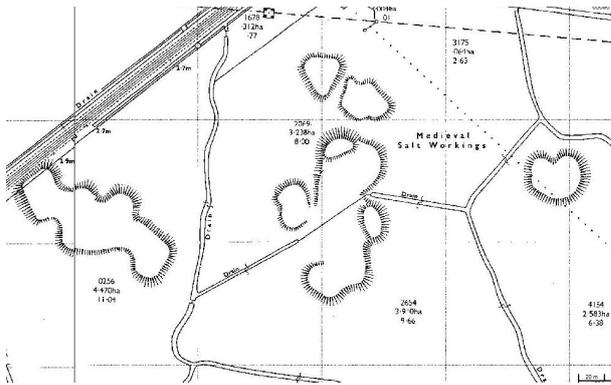
Other early features that can be seen in the Swale Borough Area (and in many other parts of the country) creating historic landscapes are burial mounds, castle mounds and salterns.

Whilst the castle no longer exists, the castle mound at Queenborough is a distinct feature in the otherwise largely flat and marshy landscape and this scheduled monument serves to provide a vivid reminder of the medieval origins of this settlement.



55. Queenborough Castle mound (a Scheduled Monument).

At Graveney marshes, in the northeast part of the Borough and on the edge of the Seasalter Level can be found a series of six salterns. These structures were used for the production of salt from sea water and the hummocky area of mounds you can see today (rising to a height of approximately 6 metres above surrounding ground levels) are the (since grown over) heaps of marsh clay waste discarded after brine extraction. This historic feature is today protected by scheduling.



56a. Map showing the remains of salterns at Graveney Marsh, near Seasalter (from 1957 - 1986 OS map)



56b. Aerial photo of saltern remains at Graveney Marsh, near Seasalter (from 1999 county survey)

Finally, no overview of historic landscapes in the Borough would be complete without some mention of the significant semi-natural landscapes created to serve the grand homes of the landed gentry and big industrial business proprietors. The landscapes around four such grand houses (namely Lees Court, Belmont House, Doddington Place and Mount Ephraim) are of such significance because of the striking nature of aspects of their designed landscapes, that Historic England has chosen to add them to its Register of Parks & Gardens of Historic Interest. Each of these properties displays a range of landscaping ranging from the highly ornate to the more naturalistic in style in the vein of the most famous English landscape gardener, Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown. The illustration below shows an example of the more ornate style of landscape design based around the Italian sunken garden theme with formal planted beds and terracing around a central pond feature.

The more informal style of landscape design in the style of Capability Brown is perhaps more easily and readily appreciated at Syndale just to the southwest of Faversham, where a Palladian mansion erected on the summit of the hill there enjoyed a commanding view over the surrounding landscape. The mansion was largely destroyed by fire in 1961, but as referenced in the character appraisal for the conservation area there, the area is still dominated by a fine landscaped parkland that matured around the site of the former grand country house. This designed landscape combines in a naturalistic way with the network of woodlands and shaws that grow on the steep and less easily farmed sloped of the Newnham Valley – one of a series of dry chalk valleys that emerge from the crest of the Kent Downs and cut through the landscape northwards. This fine combination of landscape elements is further enhanced by a range of Victorian buildings including the Syndale Estate dairy and gatehouse which in combination serve to create a distinctive historic landscape little changed in visual terms in a period of around 200 years.



57. Sunken garden at Doddington Place Gardens, designed by Kirsty Knight Bruce. Image provided courtesy of Doddington Place Estate.



58. Syndale estate historic buildings and parkland landscape.

3.13 Archaeology

Introduction

Swale has an incredibly rich and varied archaeological resource. This richness is a legacy of its strategic location at the mouth of the Thames and Medway rivers, it lying astride the principle conduit of people and trade between the continent and London, together with its varied geography including coast, marshland and chalk downs which have been exploited by peoples since ancient times.

Archaeological assets are part of all the themes that are discussed in this Heritage Strategy and provide the physical evidence of Swale's past. They cover the entire period of human habitation from the traces of the hunter-gatherer peoples of the Palaeolithic to the remains of defence industry, farming and settlement of the 20th century.

The archaeological record of the Borough comes in many shapes and forms. It includes remains buried beneath Swale's towns, villages, fields and marshlands, it includes buildings and other structures, earthworks, ditches and landscape features and it includes the sediments and environmental evidence that help us understand the ancient topography, processes and environments that influenced human habitation and use of the landscape.

Swale's archaeology is not confined to the land but also includes former land that now lies submerged together with a wealth of wrecks in our coastal waters. Archaeological assets range from individual finds and features to extensive sites and evidence of archaeological and historic landscapes.

Designation and protection of archaeological remains

There is statutory protection for nationally important archaeological remains through the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 where they are designated as Scheduled Monuments (formerly Scheduled Ancient Monuments). However, not all nationally important archaeological remains are Scheduled and protected in this way. There are cases of known nationally important remains which have not been protected and areas where they have only been partially Scheduled principally for land use and management reasons. There are many more cases where important archaeological remains lie buried and where their full importance has not been sufficiently identified to allow Scheduling and many, many more nationally important remains, or even internationally important remains, will lie hidden awaiting discovery. Archaeological remains also contribute to and are protected by other forms of historic environment designation such as Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields, Protected Wrecks and Military Crash Sites.

While the greatest emphasis is on the protection and preservation of nationally important remains, there are numerous remains that are significant at a regional and local level which merit protection.

The Kent Historic Environment Record (HER), maintained by Kent County Council is the principal inventory of archaeological assets in the county. The HER is not a complete inventory; it is an evolving record with many new assets recognised and added to it every day both by dedicated Historic Environment Record officers and by volunteers under their guidance. Thematic studies such as the Defence of Swale Survey or the Rapid Coastal Zone Assessment have and will identify large numbers of new sites for inclusion and generally increase the records in detail within particular themes or for particular locations. On occasion the HER will import records from separate databases maintained by other organisations such as Historic England.

The Kent HER is linked to a geographical information system (GIS) which allows the mapping of the records against the counties topography, geology, modern and historic maps, aerial photographs and other geographical information. The HER is available in a shortened version online through the Exploring Kent's Past web pages: www.kent.gov.uk/exploringkentspast though this is not as up to date or as detailed as the offline version and should not be relied upon for planning purposes.

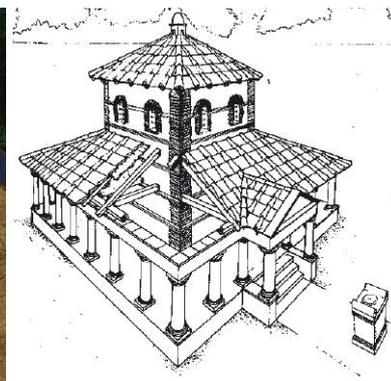
Archaeological Discovery

There has been a long history of antiquarian interest and archaeological discovery in the borough. Early antiquarians certainly visited the area and drew and described the various monuments and buildings. The 19th century arrival of the railway and the expansion of the borough's towns brought with it many chance discoveries by those building. The archaeological record for the area is full of entries relating to the findings of prehistoric axes, Roman and Saxon cremations and burials with their grave goods. Such sites tended to dominate the record of the period with objects being readily identified, bought and locally collected. A significant example of the early findings is that of the Kings Field Anglo-Saxon cemetery first found by railway navvies in 1858 and later through the next seventy years during quarrying works in the area.

By the middle of the 19th century the early antiquarianism was starting to give way to a more professional discipline, a better appreciation of the extent of human history and prehistoric chronology. National and local organisations were formed with institutions carrying out research which was published in their journals and discussed at their conferences. The Kent Archaeological Society has published many articles on Swale's archaeology in its annual journal, *Archaeologia Cantiana*, since it was formed in 1857.

Following the second world war there came a rise in local archaeological groups and societies excavating sites in their localities as part of their own research and in response to discoveries during development. The 1960s and 1970s, in response to the need for a more concerted approach to rescue archaeology in advance of development, saw the rise of units with a core of professional staff such as the Kent Archaeological Rescue Unit and the Canterbury Archaeology Trust to work on key sites and discoveries threatened by development. Perhaps one of the more notable sites excavated in this period was that of the Royal Abbey at Faversham that was excavated by the Kent Archaeological Rescue Unit in 1965.

In 1989 Kent followed the example of other counties and appointed its first County Archaeologist to advise planning authorities and maintain a Sites and Monuments Record. The publication of Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 in 1990 provided a much firmer basis for the conservation and investigation of archaeological sites affected by development. With increasing development pressure and such a richness of archaeology, Swale has since seen an explosion in the amount of work undertaken in advance of development in most areas of the borough. Most of the work, funded by developers has been undertaken by professional archaeological units both from Kent and further afield. Many sites have been discovered which have provided a major contribution to our understanding of the borough's ancient history. These include such



59. & 60. Remains (in-situ) of a Romano-Celtic Temple and its 3D reconstruction at the Persimmon Homes site off Newington High Street (2019). Images provided courtesy of SWAT Archaeology.

sites as the substantial Neolithic camps, Bronze Age and Iron Age enclosures discovered in advance of housing development at Kingsborough Manor in Eastchurch; numerous sites that illustrate the rich later prehistoric and Romano-British landscapes around Sittingbourne and Faversham and extending along the A2 corridor and into newly developed areas around Iwade and Kemsley; Rich Anglo-Saxon burial sites at the Meads in Bobbing, clustered around a number of Neolithic and Bronze Age monuments; Sites within the historic towns and settlements that are shedding light on their early development; and on sites of the early industrial, defensive and maritime heritage of the borough for example at Oare's gunpowder sites, Sheerness' dockyard and defences and Sittingbourne's paper mill. Of particular note is the recent remarkable discovery of a Roman road, industrial area and temple on a new housing site in Newington (see illustrations 59 & 60).



61. Part of the Sheerness Defences (a Scheduled Monument) behind the C20 flood defence wall. Image provided courtesy of Simon Mason.

Alongside development led archaeology have been projects to map or gather information on various heritage themes, for example the Defence of Swale project which identified and mapped the remarkable First World War defences of the Chatham Land Front between Detling and Iwade.

The borough is also the subject of a number of archaeological projects undertaken by local archaeological societies such as the Faversham Society Archaeological Research Group, the Historical Research Group of Sittingbourne and groups in Newington, Newnham and on Sheppey that have all been actively involved in archaeological survey and investigation. Much work has also been done in discovering and investigating new sites in the area between Sittingbourne and Faversham by the Kent Archaeological Field School. In response to all this archaeological work a unique initiative was developed in The Forum at Sittingbourne with the establishment of CSI Sittingbourne, an archaeological conservation laboratory where local volunteers could gain hands on experience conserving archaeological finds from local excavations.

The Archaeology of Swale

The archaeology of Swale is a vast resource of outstanding significance that covers the long period of human history from the Palaeolithic to the present day. It is varied and complex. The Borough's archaeology can be found in its settlements where in places it will be deeply buried under consecutive layers of deposits representing periods of that place's history. It may be found in the fields and rural places of the Borough where it may be more shallow buried but extensive. The marshlands on the north coastline and the Isle of Sheppey may contain remains that are deeply buried, well preserved organics in peat deposits or may survive as features associated with the marshland reclamation. Earthworks may survive in woodland, protected from plough erosion for centuries and longer. Artefacts and ancient faunal remains may be found within the brickearth and gravel deposits that have been extracted within the borough. Wrecks and hulks lie along the borough's coastline and offshore; the remains of Swale's historic buildings, structures, defences and industry all include archaeological evidence.



62. The investigation of Pleistocene deposits by Archaeology South East (ASE) at Stones Farm, Baphild. The photographs show a section through the brickearth and underlying gravels that contain Palaeolithic artefacts. The specialist from ASE in the 2nd photograph is pointing to a former ground surface. The 2nd photo also shows the specialist sampling of the deposits in a tin for laboratory examination of the way in which the soils have laid that will help to understand the environmental conditions at the time. The circular labelled samples are specialist (OSL) dating of the sediments to understand the time frame of the deposits. Images provided courtesy of Simon Mason.

Recent archaeological work has provided growing evidence of the prehistory of Swale. These range from Palaeolithic flint axes in the borough's gravel and brickearth deposits; through camps, ritual and burial monuments of the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age; to extensive buried landscapes of settlement, farming and industry of the Bronze and Iron Ages. The earthwork remains of the ramparts of a small hilltop enclosure at Perry Wood in Selling also date to the Iron Age.



63. Perry Wood earthwork. The first photo shows the archaeological information plaque at the site, and the second shows the damage to the earthwork created by bikers.

The borough's Roman landscape is particularly special. The main Roman road from the Kent coastal ports to London ran through the borough along the present A2 corridor. Alongside this can be found the remains of roadside settlements, significantly at Ospringe / Syndale, the reputed site of Durolevum mentioned in the Antonine Itinerary, at Newington and at Radfield. The richness of the Roman occupation of this area is well evidenced from the large number of Roman villa sites in Swale, the remains of pottery manufacture and saltworking in the marshlands, trackways and burial sites.

Saxon evidence is mainly the rich assemblages of grave goods recovered from cemeteries. Notable amongst these are those from the Kings Field, Faversham found by workmen in the 19th century; and the more recently excavated cemeteries at the Meads in Bobbing.



64. Saxon sword and glass cups found at The Meads.
Image provided courtesy of Simon Mason

Many of the borough's historic towns and villages have origins that extend back to the medieval and earlier. Faversham and Milton developed as important port towns from Saxon times, Queenborough was established as a planned medieval town built by Edward III from 1361 to accompany his royal castle there and named for his wife Phillipa of Hainault. Sittingbourne had lesser prominence though developed as an important coaching stop for travellers along the main road to Canterbury and the coast. Other villages grew along this important road to serve the travellers and pilgrims. Tradition places an important pilgrimage stop at St Thomas a Becket's Well in Bapchild and a hospital, the Maison Dieu at Ospringe.

Other notable medieval sites include ecclesiastical sites such as the parish churches, Minster Abbey and the Royal Abbey at Faversham. Swale includes a number of castles including Queenborough Castle, the Norman motte at Tonge and another possible motte at Syndale. Moated sites include the scheduled examples at Castle Rough in Milton, and at Sayes Court at Harty, Isle of Sheppey.

Following the medieval period, we see the further development and expansion of the earlier settlements. At Sheerness a naval port is established followed by the development of Blue Town and Mile Town to serve the dockyard. To defend the dockyard a series of fortifications were built. The 18th Century earthwork fort, Fort Townshend, recently investigated during the redevelopment of the steelworks, was replaced by a moat, rampart and bastions of the Sheerness Lines separating the dockyard area from the rest of Sheppey. Later, towards the end of the 19th Century, the Queenborough Lines was built across the northwestern corner of the island to provide an outer defence for Sheerness. Other defences, designed to command the sea approaches to the Thames and Medway included Garrison Point Fort and a series of batteries along the northern coastline of Sheppey.



65. Remains of Fort Townshend barrack block at former Thamesteel site, Sheerness

The defence heritage of the borough is particularly significant given its strategic location. Recent studies and survey work has discovered a remarkable landscape of First World War anti-invasion defences that extend from Detling through to Iwade and Grovehurst. Together with defences on the Isle of Sheppey, these provide one of the best examples of anti-invasion precautions in the country with the physical remains complimented by detailed mapping, photography and emergency planning arrangements in the archives.

Swale is particularly noted for its role in aviation history. Leysdown and later Eastchurch was home to the pioneers of aviation, saw the establishment of the first Royal Naval Air Service base and its continuation as an important airfield of the Second World War. Remains of this aviation history survive as structures and buried archaeology within the present-day prison complex and the Shellness area. The remains of another fighter airfield of the First World War also survives at Throwley.

Industrial archaeological remains are also found throughout Swale. Around Faversham can be found the remains of the important gunpowder and explosives industry and its associated infrastructure. Several assets amongst these have been recognised as nationally important and designated. Around Sittingbourne can be found heritage assets associated with paper making. Across much of the northern part of the borough the remains of the extensive brickmaking industry can be found. These include former industrial buildings, a landscape of former quarries and the remains of the barges and barge building.



66. A remnant of one of the blast walls from the former gunpowder works at the Marsh Works, Oare. This is retained within the subsequent gravel workings at the site and will be a heritage asset that will be in an area of public open space eventually. It helps to illustrate the dispersed remains of the gunpowder industry around Faversham. Image provided courtesy of Simon Mason.



67. Sittingbourne Paper Mill excavation and finds research work. Image provided courtesy of Simon Mason.

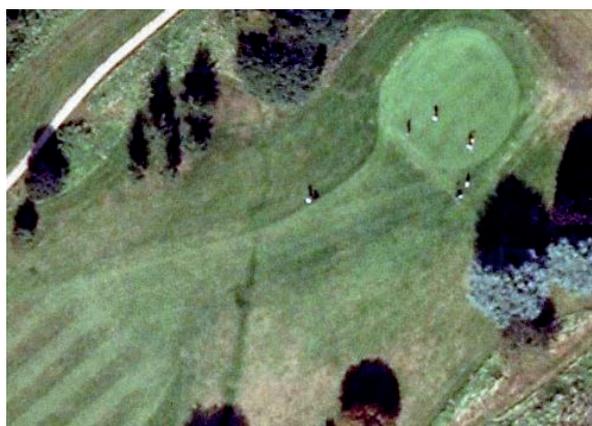
The rural areas of the borough contain a wealth of remains associated with the development of the landscape and its exploitation for farming and other uses. Archaeology in these areas includes the remains of farmsteads, enclosures and field ditches, woodland management features and the routes and trackways that provide the settlement pattern we see today.

Finally, the foreshore and sea around the coastline is rich in archaeology. Sea level rise has submerged large parts of the landscape. The islands off Swale’s coast contain a wealth of early archaeological remains as well as more recent remains. At Dead Man’s Island close to Queenborough, the graves of 19th century seamen buried from hulks in the nearby creeks are regularly exposed by the tides. Elsewhere the remains of hulks, mostly barges can be seen on the marshlands, while a number at Minster represent the remains of a boom that once extended across to the Essex shore.

Offshore can be found the remains of wrecks, most notably that of the Richard Montgomery, a munitions ship that foundered in the Second World War. Notably at Graveney Marsh the unique remains of a Saxon boat were found during ditch excavations in 1970. The Graveney Boat, which dates from the late 9th to the mid-10th century is presently at the National Maritime Museum although there are ambitions to return it for display in Faversham.



68. The remains of a barge hulk on the foreshore at Lower Halstow. Image provided courtesy of Simon Mason.



69. Aerial photograph showing the parchmark of a former medieval ditch cutting across the fairway at one of Swale Borough’s golf courses. Image provided courtesy of Simon Mason.



70. Wreck of the former munitions ship, the USS Richard Montgomery, off the coastline of the Isle of Sheppey. Image provided with the consent of www.submerged.co.uk

3.14 Museums, collections & archives (digital/traditional)

The museums, collections & archives in Swale Borough make a valuable contribution to the overall heritage offer that the borough provides, and a number of the museums and/or associated heritage related attractions contribute positively to local tourist and visitor economy.

The group of museums, collections & archives and heritage related attractions are represented by the collective organisation called Historic Swale. This replaced an earlier affiliation called the Swale Museums Group. The Council supported the original affiliation and was instrumental in helping to set up the Historic Swale organisation. This is effectively an umbrella charity, which as it's website clearly states (see: <https://historicswale.org.uk>) supports its member attractions and organisations in the 3 areas which make up Swale district (Faversham, Isle of Sheppey and Sittingbourne) to collectively showcase the diverse and fascinating heritage which the borough offers.

At the time of writing, the members of Historic Swale are those that are set out in the table below, as Figure 3.



71. Faversham's Fleur de Lis Museum

Faversham	Isle of Sheppey	Sittingbourne
Chart Gunpowder Mills	Blue Town Heritage Centre and Criterion Music Hall	Milton Regis Court Hall
Faversham Heritage Hub	Eastchurch Aviation Museum	Sittingbourne and Kemsley Light Railway
Fleur De Lis Heritage Centre	Minster Abbey Gatehouse Museum	Sittingbourne Heritage Museum
Kent Police Museum (not yet open)	Queenborough Guildhall Museum	The Heritage Hub – Historical Research Group of Sittingbourne HRGS
The Faversham Society	Rose St Cottage of Curiosities	Raybel Charters (New)
The Maison Dieu		Dolphin Barge Museum (not yet open)

Fig. 3: Table of Historic Swale group members

for more details visit <https://historicswale.org.uk/>

It is anticipated that further heritage-related sites/organisations will become members of Historic Swale, and whilst the Council is no longer directly involved with Historic Swale, it is nevertheless committed to continuing to support this important umbrella organisation and its individual members as far as its resources allow. This may include the provision of grants to support the development projects of member groups which the Council consider to be of particular public benefit.

Increasing awareness of the group and its members activities is clearly important, and the Council is committed to doing this through its own website and any other appropriate means that may arise.

The Council is very aware that centres such as the Sheerness Blue Town Heritage Centre, and organisations such as the Faversham Society and Sittingbourne Society contain a wealth of useful local heritage knowledge, and in some cases, expertise. Previously the Council has tended to carry out heritage related project work with only limited liaison with parties, but as a firm principle of this heritage strategy (see section 1.4 of this strategy document), the Council is committed to working, where possible, in a more collaborative manner, and this for example might result in the production of Conservation Area Review and Character Appraisal and Management Plans being jointly produced, with the appropriate acknowledgment given to all project partners. In other cases, the Council will be willing to support heritage related work or projects led by others, and as part of its commitment to producing a series of action plans on work in which the Council will act independently or as the lead partner in a partnership approach, the Council will include on such action plans, summary details of heritage-related projects in Swale being led by other organisations, in order to increase awareness of, and to help promote them.

The range of artefacts, historic documents, and archival information kept by the local museums and/or local amenity groups and societies is invaluable to gaining an understanding of the history and associated heritage of the Borough. In many cases such local information is supplemented by archive information viewable via national sources such as the national archives at Kew, the Historic England archive at Swindon, and the British Library in London.

The Council is aware of the issues that many of the museums face in archiving heritage collections and in particular, the way in which the archaeological finds of the Borough can be adequately stored and made accessible for the future. This is a matter which it is committed to exploring in liaison with Historic Swale and Kent County Council.



72. Murston Old Church – a Scheduled Monument with the project to repair and re-use the church supported by the Council.

3.15 Portable/moveable heritage

This type of heritage refers to transportation vehicles in the form of trains and trams, boats, planes and road/terrain/military vehicles, and associated items such as the carriages and wagons for locomotives.

In this respect, Swale is currently limited to trains and boats, although it is possible that the range of portable/moveable heritage will expand to also encompass trams, planes and road/terrain/military vehicles at some point in the future.

In respect of trains, we know that the Swale area was rich in industrial railways, with the Davington Light Railway being used to carry workers in the Faversham area to the armament factories there. On the Isle of Sheppey, the steelworks and Royal Naval Dockyard at Sheerness were served by a railway, whilst at Highsted, the quarries were linked using a railway. However, the only industrial railway left operating in Swale is the Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway's two mile remnant of the former Bowater



73. The classic Melior locomotive crossing the Milton Regis Viaduct on the Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway. Image provided courtesy of Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway.

Railway serving the papermaking industry in Sittingbourne from 1906. We are fortunate that the Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway (SKLR) preserves not just this remaining track and associated infrastructure (including workshop buildings and the Milton Regis viaduct – which are of at least local heritage interest in their own right), but also 8 locomotives that worked with the papermills all of their working life. The locomotives at the site date from the beginning of the 20th Century, those initially used being 0-4-2 Brazil type tank engines, sourced from the Stoke-based locomotive manufacturers, Kerr Stuart & Co. All the locos today are in various states of condition, some in good condition and in operation, and others in need of some repair or a major overhaul – a similar scenario also applying to the rolling stock which the SKLR owns. The SKLR opened as a tourist railway in 1970 and since then has operated nearly 900,000 passenger journeys, and today it stands as a vivid reminder of the strong industrial roots of Sittingbourne and in particular its papermaking heritage. For more information on the history and development of the SKLR, including details about its locomotives and rolling stock, please visit the railway and/or its website: <http://www.sklr.net>

In respect of boats, readers will have noted (at section 3.7) that the Swale coastline was historically the scene of much boatbuilding and barge traffic. This is no longer the case although its creeks and the Swale channel they feed into are still used by recreational boaters and some limited boatbuilding and boat repair work still takes place in the Borough.

Milton Creek at Sittingbourne was historically used for boatbuilding and gravel extraction for brickmaking. At the creek today can be found the recently constructed Dolphin Barge Museum. The sailing vessel being restored at this site is the Thames Sailing Barge, Raybel, originally made and launched at Milton Creek in 1920. Raybel Charters is working to return this 90ft



74. The Thames sailing barge, Raybel, under restoration at Milton Creek (awaiting consent for public use of image)

originally powerful coastal sailing vessel (which operated between London and the east coast ports as well as the near continent) to full cargo delivery operation under sail; and to manage this barge as a newly revitalised heritage asset for community benefit. For more information on the history and restoration of the Raybel, please visit the Dolphin Barge Museum site and/or visit the Raybel Charters website: <https://raybelcharters.com>

3.16 A snapshot of our designated heritage

The renowned Buildings of England series of books recognises that Kent has an exceptionally rich architectural heritage. The most recent national data available from Historic England indicates that Kent has over 17,800 entries in the national list of buildings of special architectural or historic importance. This is more than any other county in the South East, and comparable to the whole of London which has over 18,800 listed building entries.

Swale is one of 13 local authority districts in Kent and contributes significantly to the high level of heritage interest that can be found in the county. At the time of writing, Swale contains over 1430 listed building, 50 conservation areas, 4 Historic Parks & Gardens and 22 Scheduled Monuments. Kent districts ranking comparison data on the extent of heritage assets which each district has is available to view via the Council's 2015 Heritage Asset Review, see : [https:// archive.swale.gov.uk/assets/Planning-General/Planning-Policy/Evidence-Base/LP-Examination-documents/Swale-Heritage-Asset-Review-June-2015.pdf](https://archive.swale.gov.uk/assets/Planning-General/Planning-Policy/Evidence-Base/LP-Examination-documents/Swale-Heritage-Asset-Review-June-2015.pdf), although it should be noted that some of the data in this document may now be incorrect by small margins.

Listed Buildings

The distribution of Swale Borough's listed buildings can be seen on Figure 4 overleaf. It can be seen from this that there is a wide distribution of listed buildings/structures across the Borough, but also that there are key areas with high concentrations of listed buildings, most notably within the historic core of Faversham, and around the historic slipway structures within Sheerness Port.

General information about the importance of, and the protection applicable to listed buildings is available from Historic England (see www.historicengland.org.uk/listings/what-is-designation/listed-buildings).

The term listed buildings can be a little misleading, as listing can also apply to structures which are clearly not buildings e.g. milestone markers, walls and gates.

When a building or structure is listed, the protection and controls that come with this apply to the whole building or structure both externally and internally, unless explicitly stated otherwise. In some cases, listing is applied only to a particular part of a building or structure, such as a shopfront, but this is not common. Because many buildings and/



75. The former Adult Education Centre in Sittingbourne – one of Swale's many listed buildings



Fig 4: Map showing Swale’s listed buildings

or structures are attached to others, either in individual form, or as part of a designed terrace, some list entries provide protection and associated planning controls for more than one building/structure. There are many examples of this type of list entry both in Swale Borough and elsewhere. As such, whilst Swale has over 1430 listed building entries, it is estimated that the total number of buildings/structures this represents may be closer to 2000, although some research is needed in this respect.

Swale Borough has a wide variety of listed buildings/structures that vary significantly in size, overall form and age – the latter ranging from the 11th century through to the second half of the 20th century. An example of one of Swale’s many listed buildings is shown on the previous page.

The entire range of listed buildings/structures in Swale Borough can be viewed via web link on the Council’s web page on listed buildings (see: www.swale.gov.uk/listed-buildings).

Curtilage Listed Buildings

Curtilage listing is not a formal designation in its own right, but is a protection/control factor that derives directly from the process of a building or structure being designated as a listed building by the Secretary of State. This means in summary that buildings/structures directly related to the building/structure being listed can also be subjected to the same planning controls if they are deemed to fall within its curtilage. Curtilage is defined as the Oxford English Dictionary as *'an area of land attached to a house and forming one enclosure with it'* but the extent of land, particularly in the case of a sprawling country estate or farmstead and what constitutes 'enclosure' are often matters up for debate, in spite of advice produced by Historic England in 2018 which has sought to provide some guidance and associated clarity in this respect (See: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/listed-buildings-and-curtilage-advice-note-10/>)

A good example of a curtilage listed building/structure in Swale is the walled kitchen garden at Radfield House, London Road, Teynham.

Whilst the forecourt cast iron railings to this 16th Century grade II listed house are specifically referenced in the list description, the walls to the former kitchen garden are not, yet they clearly date from the mid Victorian period (or possibly earlier) and are visually and functionally linked with the house and as such would be treated as a curtilage listed structure



76. Radfield House's curtilage listed garden kitchen walls

Such protections and associated controls will only apply in certain scenarios but a fundamental criterion is that the related building or structure must date from before the 1st July, 1948. It is a matter for each Local Planning Authority, including Swale Borough Council to determine which buildings/structures within their respective areas should be treated as curtilage listed buildings and thereby apply the necessary planning controls to them when necessary.

The full extent and range of curtilage listed buildings and structures in Swale is currently unknown, and following recent changes to the way in which local land charge searches on properties are carried out (typically in relation to being sold on and subsequently bought), all Local Planning Authorities will be required to accurately capture this information. At the time of writing, all Kent Local Planning authorities are in broadly the same position as Swale so the intention moving forward is to jointly work out the most appropriate way or ways of working through this potentially laborious and time-consuming task through a working party group formed of the Kent Conservation Officers Group liaising as necessary with other parties including the relevant local authority Land Charges and Geographical Information Service (GIS) teams.

Conservation Areas

Swale's 50 conservation areas are similarly quite well distributed across the Borough area, although there are only 4 located on the Isle of Sheppey, and these are all concentrated in the northwestern quadrant of the island. Each of Swale's towns (Faversham, Queenborough, Sheerness and Sittingbourne) has at least 1 conservation area, the largest urban one being that of Faversham. The size and character of the conservation areas within Swale varies considerably, some overlap with other heritage designations (historic parks & gardens, and scheduled monuments), and many are to be found within the southern half of the Borough, contributing significantly to the special landscape quality of the North Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). They are listed below in Figure 5, in alphabetical order, and the maps (and appraisals, where these exist) for these areas can be viewed via the Council's website page for its conservation areas (see: www.swale.gov.uk/conservation-areas). Figure 6 (overleaf) shows the location of Swale's 50 conservation areas.

Badlesmere	Lynsted - Bogle
Borden - Chestnut Street	Lynsted - The Street
Borden - The Street	Milstead
Borden - Harman's Corner	Milton Regis - High Street
Borden - Hearts Delight	Newington Church
Boughton - Boughton Church	Newington - High Street
Boughton - Boughton Street	Newington - Newington Manor
Boughton - South Street	Painter's Forstal
Bredgar	Queenborough
Cellar Hill and Greenstreet	Rodmersham Green
Doddington and Newnham	Selling
Eastling	Selling - Shepherd's Hill
Faversham - Faversham Town	Sheerness: Royal Naval Dockyard and Bluetown
Faversham - Ospringe	Sheerness: Marine Town
Faversham - Preston Next	Sheerness: Mile Town
Goodnestone	Sheldwich
Graveney - Graveney Church	Sittingbourne - High Street
Graveney - Graveney Bridge	Stalisfield Green
Hartlip	Staplestreet
Hernhill	Syndale
Hernhill - Dargate	Throwley Forstal
Hernhill - Fostall	Tonge
Kingsdown	Tunstall
Lewson Street	Upchurch
Lower Halstow	Whitehill

Fig 5: Table of Swale conservation areas

For more details, visit: www.swale.gov.uk/conservation-areas



Fig 6: Map showing Swale conservation areas

Registered Parks and Gardens

Swale has four areas of designed landscape that are included in Historic England’s Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Interest. These are as set out in the table below at Figure 7. Figure 8 (overleaf) shows the location of Swale’s Registered Parks and Gardens, all of which are located in the eastern half of the borough.

For more details, visit: www.swale.gov.uk/registered-parks-and-gardens



77. Part of the topiary display at Mount Ephraim (a grade II registered park & garden)

Registered Historic Parks and Gardens
Belmont Park Grade II Registered 1986
Doddington Place Grade II Registered 1988
Lees Court Grade II Registered 1989
Mount Ephraim Grade II Registered 1988

Fig 7. Table of Swale’s Registered Historic Parks and Gardens

For more details, visit: www.swale.gov.uk/registered-parks-and-gardens



Fig 8. Map showing Swale’s Registered Historic Parks and Gardens

Scheduled Monuments

Swale is rich in archaeological interest with evidence of Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age settlements in the area, as well as the military Roman road, Watling Street, connecting the earliest Roman coastal settlements with London. The Borough is also endowed with 18th, 19th and 20th Century defence related heritage, including the 18th Century inner and 19th Century outer moated defence structures at Sheerness known as the Sheerness Defences and Queenborough Lines, and the 20th Century World War II Heavy Anti-Aircraft Gun sites at Iwade and Upchurch. Tucked away in an unassuming residential area of Faversham that developed many years after the closure of the site are the 18th to early 20th Century remains of the gunpowder factory which formed part of the Home Works site, established at this location around 1560.

The Borough contains 22 Scheduled Monuments which include the standing remains of a Romano-British mausoleum at Stone-by-Faversham, and the buried remains of a Romano-British villa and Roman-Celtic temple at Boxted. There are also important medieval sites including salterns, fortification, and ecclesiastical buildings. Swale’s 22 Scheduled Monuments are listed alphabetically overleaf by parish in Figure 9, whilst their location within the Borough is also shown overleaf in Figure 10.

At the time of writing, consideration is being given to the application for scheduling of a further archaeologically significant structure in the southeast of the borough.

Parish	List Entry Title (summary)
Dunkirk	Dunkirk WWII Chain Home Radar Station
Eastchurch	Shurland House & remains
Faversham	The Maison Dieu
Faversham	St. Saviour's Abbey
Faversham	Oare Gunpowder Works
Faversham	Chart Gunpowder Mills
Hernhill	Medieval saltern on Seasalter Level (1 of 6)
Hernhill	Medieval saltern on Seasalter Level (2 of 6)
Hernhill	Medieval saltern on Seasalter Level (3 of 6)
Hernhill	Medieval saltern on Seasalter Level (4 of 6)
Iwade	WWII Heavy Anti-Aircraft Gunsite (TS2) E. of Chetney Cottages
Leysdown	Medieval moated site at Sayes Court
Minster-on-Sea	Nunnery at Minster Abbey
Norton, Buckland & Stone	Romano-British mausoleum at Stone-by-Faversham
Queenborough	Queenborough Castle
Sheerness	Sheerness Defences
Sheerness	Queenborough Lines
Sittingbourne	Murston Old Church
Sittingbourne	'Castle Rough' medieval moated site
Upchurch	WWII Heavy Anti-Aircraft Gunsite (TS3) at Wetham Green
Upchurch	Romano-British villa at Boxted
Upchurch	Romano-Celtic temple at Boxted

Fig. 9: Table of Swale's Scheduled Monuments

For more details, visit: www.swale.gov.uk/scheduled-monuments



Fig 10: Map showing Swale's scheduled monuments

Area of High Townscape Value.

Outside of Swale’s existing designated conservation areas, parts of the Borough may become of sufficient architectural, historic and/or artistic interest in the future to warrant consideration for conservation area designation. Within the Borough’s towns, such areas may, in the meantime, be subject to development pressures and other change. A key example of this are the areas of (primarily) Victorian and Edwardian housing, parks and cemeteries, trees and open spaces, south of



78. A street scene view from Sittingbourne’s Area of High Townscape Value.

Sittingbourne town centre, which mark an important period in the town’s post industrial expansion. These characteristics are recognized by its identification and formal local designation as an Area of High Townscape Value, the map of which is shown overleaf at Figure 11. It is noteworthy that the tree-lined Avenue of Remembrance within this Area of High Townscape Value is only 1 of 5 such named thoroughfares in the world specifically named in this way. Furthermore, Sittingbourne’s Avenue of Remembrance is the only one dedicated to World War I with trees and plaques commemorating fallen soldiers. It very much provides a poignant reminder of the town’s marking of The Great War, and as it will 100 years since it was given its name in 2023 and some of the trees and plaques are either in a poor condition, or in some cases, missing, the Council is working with local community groups and societies to make the necessary improvements to this important local heritage feature, if possible, in time for its centenary year. This therefore forms one of the initiatives in the initial 3-year Action Plan of this Heritage Strategy.



79. Avenue of Remembrance, Sittingbourne.



Fig 11: Map showing area of high townscape value

3.17 Identifying locally important heritage

It is likely that currently unidentified heritage assets, particularly sites of archaeological interest will be discovered in the future, although it is difficult to predict answers to the questions of what, when and where with any degree of precision.

Such future discoveries may however fall within the patterns of distribution of known heritage assets (e.g. along the route of the Roman road, Watling Street) or they may occur within the clusters and concentrations of existing heritage assets, such as the historic towns. Other kinds of heritage assets, as yet undiscovered, may be associated with a geographical distribution (e.g. along Swale's coastline) or within the extent of a particular activity, such as hop/fruit growing or brickmaking.

Often, heritage that may be considered of some significance (but not necessarily of such significance to merit consideration for scheduling, listing or registration by the Secretary of State) is encountered by chance, sometimes as a result of considering a planning application for development for the heritage asset in question or to something else nearby. In such circumstances, the Council will consider whether an application should be made for designation to Historic England following initial discussions with its Designation Team. In more urgent cases where the heritage being considered is believed to be particularly significant and may be under threat of total demolition/loss or significant harm through alteration, then the Council will consider serving a Building Preservation Notice, which has the effect of treating the building or structure in question as a listed building until such time as it has been assessed by Historic England in response to a necessary parallel listing application.

More often than not, it is likely that previously unknown heritage that is subsequently discovered, will not be significant enough to warrant an application to Historic England for listing, registering or scheduling, or the serving of a Building Preservation Notice, but this does not mean any interest in its heritage significance stops there.

The Council records in its reports on applications for planning permission when it considers buildings/structures directly or indirectly affected by a development proposal should be treated as an undesignated heritage asset for the purposes of decision making, as this can rightly have a bearing on the outcome of such an application. Moving forward from the beginning of the Heritage Strategy plan period, the Council will keep a database of all such undesignated heritage assets, not only so that they can be recorded on its applications database and GIS/constraint notification systems to help ensure consistent decision making into the future, but also that the undesignated heritage assets on the list (placed as such by the specialist knowledge of the Council's Heritage Team – in consultation with external heritage specialists where necessary) may be considered for candidature in relation to the Council's planned Local List.

The Council is committed to developing a list of buildings, structures, landscape features, archaeological sites and parks and gardens of local heritage interest in partnership with Kent County Council, the Borough's local amenity societies and any other interested parties or relevant parties such as the Kent Gardens Trust (See: <https://www.kentgardenstrust.org.uk>). In respect of the 4 parks and gardens in Swale not already registered by Historic England, and which could be suitable candidates for the Local List, a good place to start would be an examination of the existing Kent Gardens Compendium, compiled by the Trust. The Council recognize that in developing such a list, a clearly defined set of criteria for selection and inclusion will be required, and also that there would be real benefit in providing supporting information on significance to assist with ongoing/future conservation management

In addition to the above, the Council will also commit to positively considering suggestions for possible new conservation areas and areas of high townscape value, although priority will be given within the lifespan of this heritage strategy to ensuring the existing heritage we already know about, or that is recognized through the development of the planned local list, is properly understood, protected and managed.



80. Sittingbourne Railway Station (a non-designated heritage asset and likely candidate for the planned Local List).

4. Our Heritage: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

(Heritage Strategy Strand B: Positive Management)

4.1 Heritage Strategy Priorities Aligning with Strategy Strand B

The Heritage Strategy Priorities which principally aligns with this strategy strand are:

Priority 2: To make use of the borough's heritage to help achieve and promote sustainable and inclusive growth and regeneration, social and economic wellbeing, and civic pride, in particular by actions to tackle and specifically reduce Swale's heritage at risk across the full range of nationally and locally designated heritage assets

Priority 5: Raising the historic environment (and the important social history associated with it) up the agenda by promoting awareness and understanding of Swale's heritage among local residents, businesses and visitors to the area, in particular to help realise the cultural, educational and associated health benefits it can offer

4.2 Our Strengths

Swale Borough contains a wealth of heritage, some of it highly significant in terms of national heritage designations and associated status, but all of it significant in one way or another at a local level. Allied to this is a good range of different local groups and societies with a strong, and long commitment to conserving and promoting understanding of the heritage. As referenced elsewhere in the document, many of these groups hold detailed knowledge about many of the different types of heritage in the Borough and have the knowledge and expertise to develop their own heritage projects in partnership with the Council and/or other parties. This combination of factors will be a real strength in taking this Heritage Strategy forward and delivering on the projects set out in the series of Action Plans. Furthermore, it can also be seen that the historic environment in Swale is a significant contributor to local distinctiveness and has, and will continue to play a role in positive place making for the foreseeable future. It performs this role not only by being protected, conserved and positively managed as an important element of our cultural heritage, but also in some instances by providing a strong focal point and contextual reference for the form and design of new development.

A good recent example of this is the housing development scheme approved in relation to the grade II listed Sheppey Court at Halfway, on the Isle of Sheppey. Here, it is proposed that the former grand home of the historically important developer (Sir Edward Banks: 1770-1835) is shorn of its ugly institutional extensions from the 1960s, restored and brought back into use as six generously proportioned private flats, and providing the focal point and architectural inspiration for a further 33 homes, within a heavily treed setting set against the open marshland landscape, north and west of the local centre of Halfway.

The Council does not believe there is a need for a Swale Design Guide. It is considered that such a document would overlap significantly with existing guidance and provide

only limited additional benefit.

Instead, the Council considers that in relation to the borough's historic environment, up-to-date assessments of each individual or area-based heritage asset should be in place to help inform the character and form of new development and ensure that they display a distinctive character to complement their context. That is why a priority for this heritage strategy moving forward is to work towards the review and appraisal of all the borough's conservation areas.



81. Artist's impression, by Clague Architects, of the proposed Sheppey Court housing scheme, Halfway, Isle of Sheppey (Sheppey Court is a Grade II Listed Heritage at Risk Building)

4.3 Our weaknesses

At the time of writing, Swale Borough has the unenviable record of having the largest number of recorded heritage assets of all the Kent local authorities on the national Heritage at Risk Register updated annually by Historic England on a regional basis, with input from all the English local authorities. The statistics in this respect are not helped by the economic conditions affecting parts of the Borough, notably Sittingbourne and many parts of Sheppey including Sheerness. This means that the objective of tackling heritage at risk issues can be sometimes be threatened by or impacted heavily by development viability issues which in some cases means it can be difficult to find a solution.

Historically, some local authorities have been reluctant to add items to the register including their area, as they have felt this reflected poorly on the management of their historic environment. To some degree, this is indeed still the case but hiding the true scale of the problem is not helpful for a number of reasons, and it is not a course of action that this Council has, or would choose to take.

A problem that Swale Borough Council does share with many other local authorities however, is establishing a clear and accurate picture of the true extent of heritage at risk. This in part has been due in recent years to a lack of resource at the Council to consistently monitor the situation, but there are also other factors at play here, including owners of buildings/structures known or believed to be at risk failing to liaise and/or otherwise adequately cooperate with the Council's efforts to establish the situation, and in some cases, local neighbours and/or business not reporting what they may believe to be serious breaches of planning control and/or the early signs of neglect.

The Council may not always be able to act as quickly as it, or concerned parties would like in scenarios where it discovers, or is made aware of breaches of planning control or clear evidence of neglect which has, or could threaten the heritage significance of a heritage asset. However, if the Council is at least aware of the issue, and can properly record it in a clear and systematic way, then the problem will not be overlooked and the Council can seek to intervene as soon as staff and/or other necessary resources permits.

4.4 Our opportunities

The Council is unable to commit to the regular surveying of all its listed buildings because of the sheer number of them (over 1430 listed building entries at the time of writing this heritage strategy). However it is now committed to more systematically monitoring its conservation areas, historic parks & gardens and scheduled monuments, and will do so on an annual basis from 2020 onwards.

The Council will need an additional resource to put in place this consistent and ongoing heritage monitoring system without impacting on its existing heritage-focused work, including assessing the possible impacts on heritage of new development proposals, which is effectively a full time role for one Council officer. As such, the Council is committed to exploring the possibility of creating a dedicated Heritage at Risk Officer with the possible support of other interested parties, including Historic England, Kent County Council, the borough's town and parish councils, and local amenity groups and organisations, in particular those which are member organisations of Historic Swale.

An additional resource of this nature will also be needed if the Council is to have the ability to give priority to positive intervention in relation to the heritage at risk data identified through its planned monitoring of Swale's historic environment.

Another important commitment from the Council in this respect is that of the early review of its current Planning Enforcement Strategy (last updated in 2017). Whilst the current version of this strategy appropriately prioritises the early investigation (and where appropriate, action) of breaches of planning control relating to listed buildings, it is silent on the subject of the matter of the neglect of heritage assets (deliberate or otherwise) which can threaten heritage significance to an even great degree in some instances.

The review and potential redrafting of the Planning Enforcement Strategy to properly consider the matter of heritage at risk through neglect will be an early action of the Council and this is expected to have been carried out by autumn 2020.



82. Nos. 89-91 Milton High Street, Milton Regis (a grade II listed building). Unauthorised first floor window replacement work in the process of being successfully tackled by the Council, through the use of a Listed Building Enforcement Notice.

Planning Enforcement Action is undertaken by the Council's Planning Enforcement Team, and so the Council will commit to carrying out an internal review to ensure it has the staffing resources it needs to properly support this additional area of work. As with the Council's Heritage Team, it is recognised that the Planning Enforcement Team needs to be more than a Cinderella service if it is to function effectively, and with the confidence and support of the wider community.

The Council has compiled an up-to-date heritage at risk register to act as a baseline from the adoption of this heritage strategy. This will help the Council and other interested parties to establish a clearer picture of the nature and extent of the problem, and will also help it to determine how much additional resource the Council may need to bring on board to tackle the problem, and what the priorities should be for initial intervention.

A copy of the 2020 Baseline Swale Heritage at Risk Register (which includes non-designated heritage assets as well as designated heritage assets such as conservation areas and listed buildings) is attached as Appendix II to this heritage strategy.

The Council is already aware of certain individual, or groups of buildings that are likely to need prioritization from a heritage at risk perspective, and this would include some of the listed buildings within the Sheerness Port operational area, notably the grade I listed boat store, a building of international importance, named by the Victorian Society as being one of the country's top ten most at risk.



83. Radfield House, Teynham – an at risk grade II listed building

Where possible, the Council will work closely with key partners, including Historic England and current or prospective owners to ensure that the issues that have led to a heritage at risk status being recorded or threatened, are dealt with as effectively and expeditiously as possible.

The Council is committed to making the Swale Heritage at Risk Register freely available to view on its website from 2020 onwards, as well as continuing to provide local feedback to Historic England to inform the regionally formatted National Heritage at Risk Register. It is very aware of the significant role that the community stakeholder groups can play in helping to monitor and enhance the information that goes into this important document. Moving forward, and with the range of heritage assets that it is anticipated will be added to the planned Local List, it is also anticipated that a wider range of heritage asset types may well feature in the Swale Heritage at Risk Register. Notable in this respect is archeological heritage, and the Council will liaise with Kent County Council and local amenity groups/societies with specialist knowledge in this area to develop the register in this respect, where necessary. Furthermore, the Council will explore the use of additional software packages that may assist in the recording and monitoring of information/data concerning listed buildings, in particular for those on its local Heritage at Risk Register.

4.5 Our threats

Climate change and the increasing problem of flooding represent a growing threat for significant amounts of the heritage in the Borough, principally along its coastal fringes but also in some other location. However, for the foreseeable future, the biggest threat to heritage in the Borough comes in the form of the significant development pressure the Borough faces, and in particular the extent of housing growth it is expected to accommodate. Aside from the potential harm this can cause to archaeological heritage and the setting and associated character of historic areas and individual buildings/structures or small groups of such (an issue also referenced at section 1.8), there will likely continue to be pressure placed on the Council from major house builders and other significant developers to utilise standard designs and/or corporate templates/preferences in putting forward major development schemes which can have a negative impact on the character of individual areas, and indeed how Swale Borough is perceived as a whole. In some less visually sensitive locations this standardized approach may be acceptable to some degree. However, the Council will seek to ensure through the development management process that all new development displays a sufficient level of design quality and distinctiveness, in accordance with national planning policy guidance, and that where proposed new development has the potential to materially affect the historic environment, that sufficient attention is paid to this objective. Where appropriate, the Council will use the mechanisms of development briefs and/or design codes to ensure that development proposals display an appropriate level of contextual sensitivity and associated design quality.

The following list identifies areas where particular care is required to consider the impact of development on heritage assets and their setting:

Conservation Areas: Conservation areas need to be considered on an area-by-area basis in terms of factors including sensitivity and capacity to accommodate change without harm arising. Many conservation areas can however accommodate high levels of change. The Council recognizes that change over time created the notable character of many areas, particularly in and around town centres.

Listed Buildings: Like conservation areas, listed buildings need to be considered on an individual basis, with some being able to take considerable change, whilst others are more sensitive to change. This must be based on an assessment of the special architectural or historic interest of the building including proper consideration of its setting.

Scheduled Monuments: Development would not normally be appropriate within the boundary of, or directly adjacent Scheduled Monuments, which are protected under non-planning legislation, and administered at the national level by Historic England. Limited development may be possible, where it relates to the revealing, conservation and/or interpretation of the monument in question, but this would need to be discussed and agreed with Historic England. Applications for scheduled monument consent are made to Historic England, which in turn makes a recommendation to the Secretary of State for the Department of Culture Media and Sport. Applications for planning permission directly or indirectly affecting scheduled monuments are determined by the local planning authority.

Registered Historic Parks and Gardens: Protection of historic parks and gardens is often provided by conservation area or listed building status. Inclusion on the register is a material consideration in planning decisions. Generally, new buildings should not be allowed in landscaped areas, albeit there is sometimes a need for new operational

buildings or other development to support diversification. However, a very high standard of architectural design and careful siting are necessary, so as not to compromise the recognised special landscape character.

Nationally Significant Maritime and Aviation Heritage: This includes Scheduled Monuments, listed buildings, and conservation area, so would be treated as above. However, there is also undesignated heritage. Particular care is required to avoid harm to undesignated heritage, where possible, as collectively this adds to the national heritage significance of the area. This is recognised in Paragraph 197 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Archaeological areas: The current Areas of Archaeological Potential GIS mapping layer (to eventually be replaced by an Archaeological Notification Areas GIS mapping layer), together with the Historic Environment Record previously mentioned should be considered and may have implications for planning conditions (for example on archaeological investigation and recording). In particular, there may be situations where development should be designed to specifically avoid overlaying known or anticipated archaeological remains if its significance warrants it. Preservation of archaeological heritage should be the first consideration where the significance warrants it.

Undesignated heritage: Proposals for new development will often flag up potential impacts for designated heritage, but undesignated heritage is often overlooked. The significance and value of such heritage is often not properly understood and so the opportunities that such heritage can bring in creating development with a wider range of benefits can be missed. Historic England's annual Heritage Counts research survey works and findings help to highlight the various benefits that can be gained, and the Council will bear in mind some of the key findings from this ongoing research in taking decisions on development affecting heritage assets, designated or undesignated. For more information on the Heritage Counts series, see:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/research/heritage-counts/>

4.6 Heritage assets: appraisal & positive management

Detailed appraisal of heritage assets (of all different types) provides the best platform for positive management, as this helps to identify the elements that make the area, building or structure worthy of designation in the first instance, as well as clarifying parts of the area or building/ structure that contribute little to the level of interest, and as such could be deemed less sensitive to change, providing that change is positive.

Conservation Areas and Article 4 Directions

The Council is responsible for the matter of designating, reviewing and positively managing conservation areas, although the positive management aspect is something that is difficult to achieve without the support of third parties, including property owners and Kent County Council as the Highway Authority. To be suitable for designation, an area must be '... of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'.

Swale Borough currently has 50 conservation areas, and the majority of these have either no appraisal, or dated and inadequate appraisals to function effectively for the task of positive management – a role that also includes ensuring through the

development management process, that any new development that takes place within a conservation area, or within its setting does not cause harm, and where possible, has an enhancing effect. It is therefore vitally important that all of the Borough's conservation areas have an up-to-date and effective character appraisal and management plan in place, as it is only through such documents that the special interest of each one can be identified, expressed and properly taken into account in managing development in such areas and considering possible improvement/enhancement works.

Priority 1 of this heritage strategy is to therefore work towards the systematic review of all the borough's conservation areas. The Council does not have the resources available to undertake this work all at once. It will need to be carried out over a period of years, and the Council will seek to work with the borough's town and parish councils and local amenity groups/ societies to undertake this important review and appraisal work.

It will be seen in the first 3-year action plan of this heritage strategy that almost all the actions relate to conservation area appraisal work. This is because 8 of Swale's 50 conservation areas (i.e. 16% of the total) are considered to be at risk (suffering from harmful change) and/or their special character is threatened to some degree by significant new development and/or a lack of effective management. It can be seen that the conservation areas proposed to be reviewed in the first (3 year) action plan, all fall within one of these two categories, with the main focus being on seeking to fully identify, understand and address heritage at risk issues through this process.

As indicated earlier in this heritage strategy, the Council cannot currently search out possible new conservation areas when the 50 it already has are not being monitored and positively managed as they ought, so effectively getting the 'house in order' is considered to be the higher priority. However, the Council will consider and carry out some initial basic research in relation to suggestions already received from the community about possible future designations. Feedback in this respect has suggested the possibility of new conservation areas at Eastchurch and Kemsley, and the Council will consider these for possible designation as soon as resources allow.

Returning to the issue of addressing conservation areas at risk, it is very much the case that whilst conservation area designation alone provides broad protection, it still allows a level of potentially harmful alteration through the system of permitted development rights (i.e. work that can be carried out without the need for planning permission) allowed under the planning system. In this light, it was therefore perhaps unsurprising that Historic England's historic environment survey of 2018 identified a wide problem of incremental harm arising from alterations, including neon signs, uPVC doors and windows, loss of traditional frontages and other changes. Town centres in particular were highlighted as suffering from unsympathetic alterations.



84. The parish Church of All Saints, Eastchurch, at the heart of the village – a grade I listed building

To address this issue, Article 4 Directions (which can be used to limit permitted development rights and require planning permission to be gained) would need to be prepared for the conservation areas where harm is occurring. These vary for different conservation areas, according to the specific character, but changes observed include the replacement or alteration of traditional doors, windows and shopfronts. As part of its approach to tackling the issues adversely affecting some of the borough's conservation areas, the Council will also investigate the possibility of using an additional planning control called an Area of Special Advertisement Control. This would provide the Council with greater level of control over shop signs and associated advertising, as the poor quality of many shop signs and the amount of signage and associated advertising allowed under the planning regulations (without the need for advertisement consent) is already an issue in some areas of the borough, and is anticipated to spread to other areas without some positive intervention/management.

Listed Buildings

These are designated by the Secretary of State on the recommendation of Historic England, and the decision to designate is typically taken in the light of planned thematic surveys looking at areas of topical interest, such as public buildings.

Past listing reviews in Swale have expanded the number of listed buildings, recognising later period and industrial heritage. This includes some key defence, maritime and aviation buildings and structures. However, it is now apparent that aviation and defence heritage is under-represented and in some cases, possibly undervalued on the statutory lists.

The Borough Council will work closely with Historic England and Kent County Council to ensure that buildings of high heritage value that are not currently on the national list of buildings of special architectural and historic interest are considered for it. In particular this will include:

- War structures;
- 20th century buildings;
- Aviation buildings and structures;
- Maritime buildings and structures.

Suggestions raised through the 2018 stakeholder survey carried out in relation to this heritage strategy include:

- Aviation history at Eastchurch and Garrison (surviving hangars already listed)
- Buildings at the Dockyard in Sheerness (some already listed);
- The Harps Inn, outstanding art deco building;
- Minster Old School, original school building;
- Kingsferry Bridge due to its unusual form and landmark function; and

Assuming sufficient evidence to support this can be compiled (by working in partnership with Kent County Council, Eastchurch Aviation Museum and other local community organisations) the Council will make a formal request to Historic England that it undertakes a listing review in respect of aviation and defence structures in Swale at the earliest opportunity.

Management of listed buildings is the responsibility of the owner but the Council is able to offer free advice on repairs and maintenance, as well as a fee paying pre-application service in relation to proposals for alterations, extensions and new development e.g. outbuildings, such as garages (see: <https://www.swale.gov.uk/pre-application-advice/>). The Listed Property Owners Club (which is based in Swale, but operates nationally) is another good source of advice for the owners of listed properties and the Council would encourage all listed property owners to consider joining this very worthwhile club (see: <https://www.lpoc.co.uk>).

Regular and appropriate maintenance is key to the good stewardship of listed and other historically or architecturally important building, in particular those that are of traditional timber framed or masonry (brick and/or stone) construction. The Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) which promotes and helps to regulate best practice in the historic environment field produces a guide called A Stitch in Time which property owners may find helpful in working out an appropriate maintenance regime (see: <https://www.ihbc.org.uk/stitch/Stitch%20in%20Time.pdf>).

For larger and/or more significant listed buildings the production of a conservation management plan can be a worthwhile investment. Amongst other things, this can help to identify key areas of repairs that need to be undertaken, a regime for necessary ongoing maintenance (to limit the need for future repair) and planned improvements which could be undertaken to enhance the amenity of the building, without compromising its heritage significance. Note that such improvements might necessitate listed building consent and/or planning permission so any such element of a conservation management plan would need to be discussed with the Council's Heritage Team.

Curtilage Listed Buildings

Curtilage listing is not a formal designation in its own right, but is a protection/control factor that derives directly from the process of a building or structure being designated as a listed building by the Secretary of State. This means in summary that buildings/structures directly related to the building/structure being listed can also be subjected to the same planning controls if they are deemed to fall within its curtilage.

The full extent and range of curtilage listed buildings and structures in Swale is currently unknown, so one of the actions in the initial 3-year Action Plan will be capture and make publicly available this information via the Council's website. This information will be needed to support changes currently being brought in to the way that land charge searches are handled.

In some cases the process of determining the extent of curtilage listed buildings is relatively straightforward, but in others it can be quite complex. It is clearly important therefore for Swale Borough Council and other Local Planning Authorities to take the necessary time and care in reaching decisions in this respect, particularly as there is no formal appeal process for property owners that may consider that an incorrect decision has been made. As it stands at the time of writing, the only feasible mechanisms for testing a decision in this respect (where the Local Planning Authority and property owner and/or interested party disagree on the question of curtilage listing controls applying) is:

- (a) for an application for listed building consent to alter or demolish a deemed curtilage listed building/structure, that has been refused by a Local Planning Authority to be tested on appeal by the national independent Planning Inspectorate, or
- (b) where works have been carried out to such a building/structure without prior consent and subsequently subject to a Listed Building Enforcement Notice, for that enforcement notice to be tested on appeal by the national independent Planning Inspectorate.

In some instances, curtilage listed buildings or structures can be highly significant in heritage terms in their own right, and there may be some cases where such building or structures will need to be considered for listing on their own merits. However, even where neither of the above scenarios apply, it is still typically the case that many curtilage listed buildings/structures are important in the role they play of providing a historically and contextually authentic and appropriate setting to the related listed building. A good example in this respect is a listed church and its non-separately listed lych gate (providing the lych gate dates from before the 1st July, 1948).

Listed building controls for curtilage listed buildings/structures apply both internally and externally as they do for listed buildings/structures. As such, listed property owners that know or think they may have curtilage listed buildings/structures in their ownership and care, are directed, and expected to treat them with an equal degree of sensitivity and should assume that any works planned to alter them may require listed building consent. Although it may take some time in some instances to provide such information/feedback, the Council's Heritage Team will be able to confirm whether or not curtilage listing applies, as well as providing guidance to help owners understand the heritage significance of such affected (or non-affected) buildings/structures.

Registered Historic Parks & Gardens

Swale has four sites identified on the national Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. These are:

- Lees Court Park, near Sheldwich;
- Doddington Place;
- Mount Ephraim, near Broughton under Blean; and
- Belmont Park.

Inclusion on the register is a material planning consideration, but offers little other protection, unless accompanied by a statutory designation. Swale's historic parks and gardens are fortunately protected to some degree by a combination of conservation area designations and listed building designations. Where they do not already exist, the Council will encourage the owners of these properties to develop Conservation Management Plans, as these can also equally be applied to special landscapes.

Scheduled Monuments

Scheduled Monuments are administered nationally, including procedures for gaining consents to undertake works to monuments. Scheduling brings with it, the highest level of protection under the British planning system.

Swale has 22 Scheduled Monuments. These include a Romano-British mausoleum at Stone-by- Faversham, a Romano-British villa and a Romano-Celtic temple at Boxted, important medieval sites, the Oare Gunpowder Works, Chart Gunpowder Mills, and military and civil defence structures.

As with listed buildings, the management of scheduled monuments on a day-to-day basis is the responsibility of the owner.



85. The standing and buried remains of the Romano-British Stone Chapel off the old Watling Street route, near Faversham (managed by English Heritage)

Other Archaeology

Two kinds of archaeological zones/areas have been identified by Kent County Council. These are:

Urban Archaeological Zones: These relate to medieval town layouts and archaeology, but they were limited in their scope/extent when they were produced some time ago. They will likely continue to provide some useful indication of anticipated archaeological heritage, but are anticipated to be largely superseded by the planned new Archaeological Notification Areas (see below).

Areas of Archaeological Potential: These are areas where notification of planning application is necessary. It is proposed to rename them as Archaeological Notification Areas. The boundaries are proposed to be reviewed as part of the development of this work. The Historic Environment Record recognises other non-designated archeology. This is dispersed across the Borough, and inclusion on the Historic Environment Record is a material consideration in making decision in relation to development proposals.

Swale Borough Council will liaise with Kent County Council over the ongoing process of reviewing defence related heritage to ensure that the aviation and defence heritage of the Isle of Sheppey is fully recognised. This will build on the work already carried out by Kent County Council's Heritage Team for the Defence of Swale project.

Furthermore, if the evidence supports it, the Council in liaison with Kent County Council and local community organisations will approach Historic England to discuss the potential for a book on Swale's aviation and defence heritage. This could help to underpin wider statutory protections, as well as helping to make this aspect of Swale's historic environment more widely known and appreciated.

At section 4.3 in relation to the borough's heritage at risk, it has been recognised that an area approach will typically be needed to address the problems resulting in harm to heritage assets, and it is anticipated that the management plans of individual conservation areas will be key in this respect.

However, whether tackling issues of this nature on an area or site specific basis, the issue of viability does need to be given some consideration. In this respect, it is recognised that the poor condition of some heritage assets is a factor of marginal economic viability in some parts of the borough.

This is at the time of writing principally a problem affecting Sheerness, Queenborough & Rushenden, and Sittingbourne, although degradation of the built environment is a serious problem with smaller centres too. This can include poor quality alterations,

poor maintenance and vacancy/disuse. A prime example of this is the situation to be found in Newington, where market failure is apparent in the number of closed business, vacant properties and poor maintenance. Factors contributing to such failure appear to include highway congestion, associated poor air quality and a degraded built environment.

The Council will commit to tackling issues of poor quality alterations and deterioration in a joined-up way wherever possible (e.g. seeking to tackle all the issues on one High Street at a time systematically – in some cases as part of a management plan action) as in so doing, early successful interventions may eliminate the need to tackle all the identified buildings in such an area, by encouraging positive action by property owners without the need for intervention by the Council. The Council will utilise all the powers at its disposal to help improve condition and vitality to areas compromised and struggling with negative change, but it must be recognised that some factors (notably air quality and viability) are only likely to be tackled effectively with more strategic level intervention at government or regional level.



86. Degraded buildings in Sittingbourne High Street Conservation Area

Locally important heritage

Swale does not at present have a local list, but will work towards this as identified at Section 3.17. Buildings, structures, landscape features, archaeological sites and parks and gardens of local heritage interest are not automatically protected against demolition or harmful alteration, as is the case (to varying degrees) with heritage assets protected by national level designations.

However, Article 4 Directions can be used to put in place protection from demolition (where applicable) and also from insensitive change that could arise through the use of permitted development rights.

Furthermore, inclusion on a local list is a material planning consideration where works/development is proposed to the heritage asset itself or on adjacent land that would affect the character and significance of the asset through change to its setting. This is already reflected in the text of the adopted Local Plan (Bearing Fruits 2031 - see page 284, paragraph 7.8.7), which explicitly recognises that some non-listed buildings may be of some heritage value. However, a specific local list policy will be included in the next version of the Swale Local Plan to give stronger protection to the conservation

of local list heritage assets. However, it must be recognized that such a policy would only effectively come into play in relation to works or development that require planning permission.

With or without the application of any additional controls to provide some degree of protection to local list heritage assets, the support of owners will critically important in developing a local list. Helping owners to understand the value of local listing beyond their own immediate interests will be key here as without the majority of owners effectively buying-in to this initiative, the project may not get off the ground, or its long-term value will likely be quite limited.

Consultation would need to take place with the owners of buildings/structures proposed to be added to a Swale Local List, and the Council is aware that it might need to give consideration to providing a guide for the owners of such buildings/ structures to assist them with advice on the matter of maintenance, repairs and alterations, etc.

There is no set mechanism for the development of a local list, so the Council will investigate the types of models used elsewhere and thereafter seek to apply an approach that fits best for Swale. This would, as indicated above, be in partnership with the borough's local amenity societies and any other interested parties.



87. Possible candidate building for a future Local List – Sittingbourne's New Century Cinema, in the High Street Conservation Area.

4.7 Heritage assets: positive intervention

The Council has had some successes in tackling problems affecting the Borough's heritage assets, including those identified as being at risk. Most notable of these in recent years was the action it took in 2016 to secure the future of the former military hospital in Sheerness which was close to being demolished by the new owners of the site, which took it on following the closure of the steelworks. The Council stepped in to prevent the demolition of this historically important building by serving a Building Preservation Notice, which ultimately led to the building being listed grade II. The Council is now looking at options to repair and bring the building back into use to secure its long term conservation in ongoing discussions with its owner.

Further back, in 2012, the Council took action to secure the future of the grade II* listed Dockyard Church in Sheerness. In this instance, the Council was obliged to utilize its compulsory purchase powers in partnership with the Spitalfields Trust to wrest ownership and control of the building from an irresponsible and neglectful owner. The Council will use this very significant power of last resort again if needed, but in order to protect its financial position and the community that relies on it for a wide range of public services, it will look to use the underwriting systems now offered by Historic England.

In other situations, third parties have helpfully stepped in to take on the ownership of heritage at risk buildings and structures, and have invested heavily in them (under the guidance and/or control of the Council) to save them from likely eventual collapse or

demolition, and to bring them back into use. A good recent example of this in recent years is the acquisition and investment made by Paul Townson and Mark Breedon, in respect of Froggnal Farmhouse (a grade II* listed building), at Lower Road in Teynham.

The Heritage at Risk data shows that the number of conservation areas at risk in Swale has risen from 0 to 8 since 2012. Thus, whilst some progress is being made for buildings and places of worship, conservation areas present a growing problem. This is not necessarily indicative of rapid deterioration, but that longer-term problems are being recognised. The nature of the problem is not just about condition and maintenance, but also of harmful alterations. This raises issues around enforcement, but also around designations, including Article 4 Directions. The issues around designation and subsequent management are discussed in more detail in section 4.6. An area approach is therefore required to address some of the heritage at risk issues in Swale, in addition to targeted work on individual buildings and structures, or small groups of these. This is reflected in the series of proposed actions for the first action plan of this heritage strategy.

Finally, in relation to the nationwide issue of heritage crime, it should be noted that the Council is a member of the Kent Heritage Watch group, which sits under the umbrella of the national Heritage Watch scheme. The Council's staff, across different teams, work with the Kent Police and property owners to try and reduce the scope for heritage related crime to occur, and where such crime has occurred, to manage the impact of this as sensitively and effectively as possible, including actions to deter the possibility of further theft and/or damage. The Council is committed to becoming a member of the Alliance to Reduce Heritage Crime (ARCH) and will work with Historic England and other alliance partners to further reduce the scope for heritage crime where possible, and where it has occurred, to assist the Kent Police in the prosecution of identified offenders, in particular by providing them with information regarding the harm that has been inflicted on the heritage asset in question – harm that in some instances may be very significant and irreversible.

The Council has over the years, either used or threatened to use all the different powers available to it to address issues of heritage asset neglect/deterioration and breaches of planning control, including unauthorised alterations to, and development within the setting of a listed building.

The principal range of powers available to address issues of heritage at risk are usefully set out in the Historic England publication, *Stopping The Rot* (See: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/stoppingtherot>) and the Council will continue to employ the powers set out therein, along with Planning Enforcement and Listed Building Enforcement Notices to protect the Borough's precious heritage and secure its enjoyment for future generations.



88. Unauthorised roofing works to the Specsavers building in Faversham using red concrete tiles (left) and following intervention by the Council (right) showing the completed authorised works in a natural slate finish.

5. Our Heritage: valuing it and fulfilling its potential

(Heritage Strategy Strand C: Capitalising and Championing)

5.1 Heritage Strategy Priorities Aligning with Strategy Strand C

The Heritage Strategy Priorities which align with this Strategy strand are:

Priority 3: To recognise and promote the role of Swale's heritage in creating or enhancing local distinctiveness and a positive image for the area as a place to live, learn, work and visit, in particular by the Council continuing to work in an enabling role to develop and support projects and initiatives by local groups, societies and businesses that would bring about significant public benefit.

Priority 4: To ensure Swale's heritage forms an integral part of local strategies and initiatives to promote tourism and the visitor economy, including through the conservation and subsequent positive management of the Borough's internationally significant maritime heritage (at Sheerness Dockyard) and aviation heritage (at Eastchurch) on the Isle of Sheppey

5.2 Economic, cultural and other benefits

The economic value of heritage has been recognised at national and local level, including within the Swale Local Plan. Whilst the emphasis with heritage to date has largely been on how it can be used to increase tourism and visitors, the heritage evidence base for the Local Plan, early engagement with stakeholders in 2018 in relation to the development of this heritage strategy and information and data from Historic England's Heritage Counts annual heritage research series (See: <https://historicengland.org.uk/research/heritage-counts/>) identified a wider set of benefits. These include:

Utility Value: Most of Swale's historic buildings are in productive use. They are part of the infrastructure of the local economy and community. Such uses include housing, offices, transport infrastructure, pubs, shops, community facilities and a range of other uses.

Business and Enterprise: Older areas, especially in more peripheral locations like Blue Town in Sheerness, provide affordable and flexible accommodation, essential for supporting new micro and small businesses, social enterprises, creative industries, innovation and knowledge-based employment. The Dockyard Church project in Sheerness is focused on supporting young people and developing business and enterprise skills, helping to raise aspirations.

Attracting Investment and Economic Development: There is a direct relationship between the quality of built environment and economic development potential. It is no coincidence that Faversham has the highest concentration of historic buildings in the area and also the most viable commercial and residential economic markets in

the borough. A well maintained historic environment helps to project a positive image, create investor confidence, attract high value jobs and improve competitiveness. Swale's historic buildings and places are an asset in terms of delivering sustainable and inclusive economic development.

Town Centre Competitiveness: Historic town centres like Faversham attract shoppers and visitors. Historic buildings and areas often accommodate independent retailers and other businesses, and this is apparent in all of Swale's towns. This helps to support choice and diversity, avoiding the creation of tedious 'clone towns'.

Heritage and Culture-Led Regeneration: Heritage and culture can help to deliver dramatic physical and economic transformations and regeneration. Swale has much unrealised potential, for example in the nationally and internationally significant heritage on the Isle of Sheppey.

Heritage can also attract involvement by third sector organisations, for example through asset transfer, which is useful for achieving growth in areas where there are issues with development viability. The initiatives set out in Chapter 7 of this strategy consist of, or are led by community organisations. The transformational potential of some of these initiatives to Swale's economy should not be underestimated.

Rural Regeneration: Historic buildings and places have helped to accommodate new uses, facilitate economic diversification and form a basis for new, small industries, tourism and the visitor economy in Swale's rural areas and small settlements. In particular, this can be seen in Swale's farmsteads, barns and registered historic parks and gardens.

Tourism: Swale's heritage already supports a visitor economy, with a range of heritage visitor and nature attractions. There is considerable potential for further growth in the visitor economy. Some of the projects referred to in this heritage strategy have the potential to build on this and put Swale on the map as a destination with national and possibly even wider appeal.

Education: The heritage of the Borough offers some very real opportunities for school children and other groups to learn about the history of the Borough, and the contributions made by ordinary working people as well as those with wealth and influence in shaping the Borough we see today. Story telling by older residents about particular workplaces and types of work in the Borough combined with study tours and research could help to bring alive the evolution of the Borough through the key heritage themes outlined in this Strategy.

Workforce development and Local Trade: Repairing and restoring historic and traditional buildings places a greater emphasis on skilled, typically local labour and less emphasis on the use of physical resources, the latter being more significant in new-build development. Repair and restoration work within the historic built environment can therefore generate higher levels of pay and investment in the local economy. It can also offer school leavers in the Borough that wish to work in a trade, a long-term career in which they would learn to understand and appreciate the historic built environment and the special sets of skills and construction materials needed then and now to create and maintain it. There is currently a shortage of skilled heritage construction workers with many of the skilled workers still in this field close to retirement, so there is a real need and benefit in bringing in a new wave of young trainees to this sector of the construction industry so that vital skills are not lost forever.

Creating and/or improving Civic Pride: An area’s heritage can give its local residents and businesses a sense of place and a pride in their surroundings. This can particularly be the case where heritage assets feature as local landmarks, or as places that have historically provided work or another important focus for previous generations of people.

Health benefits: There is increasing recognition of the health benefits that active involvement with heritage assets can bring to people, and whilst more research needs to be carried out in this area, it is already known from anecdotal evidence that regular visits to larger heritage assets such as Historic Parks and Gardens or getting involved as a volunteer on a project to repair, restore or enhance a heritage asset can be hugely rewarding and bring with it a sense of wellbeing. Such interaction with heritage assets can help to maintain or improve both mental and physical health.

Achieving Sustainable

Development: The conservation and refurbishment of historic buildings and areas is an intrinsically sustainable form of development, avoiding the use and waste of scarce resources associated with demolition and redevelopment, and helping to achieve sustainable growth. Swale’s historic places and towns are in many ways, ideal for a low-carbon economy in terms of movement and activity patterns, usually having urban design characteristics based on the needs of pedestrians, with rear of pavement active frontages, permeable layouts, a fine grain of mixed uses, a concentration of community facilities and high densities through the use of terraced building forms and party wall construction.



89. The grade II* listed Naval Terrace and Dockyard Church, Sheerness.

5.3 Raising awareness and building a positive legacy

Swale’s heritage offer as a whole is a strong one and this should not be forgotten in the promotion of individual areas or attractions. Joined up thinking is needed to capitalize of the benefits that Swale’s heritage can bring to the borough as a whole.

The borough’s heritage offer includes existing well known assets, such as the historic market town of Faversham and Minster Abbey, as well as the new projects described in this strategy.

It is clear that the development of local heritage assets and their interpretation represents a major opportunity. In particular, Swale’s medieval, aviation, maritime, defence and other histories all offer significant scope to further culturally enrich the borough and boost its local economy in a number of ways. Likewise, the current and historical roles of the town centres can help to create a distinctive identity and basis for promotion, working closely with Visit Kent, Swale Tourism, Faversham, Queenborough and Sheerness Town Councils, plus other local organisations and web sites.

As the local offer improves and expands, wider promotion will be needed by the public sector (the Council and others), including promotional materials, signage and development of digital and social media.

However, the creation of visitor attractions is being led in many instances by community-led organisations. Faversham is currently the main base for tourist information and this is largely community led. Successful coordinated initiatives by the community and public sectors should help to create confidence in the private sector to create new facilities (or improve existing ones) including hotels, restaurants and bars.

The Council will support the proportionate promotion of Swale's heritage attractions, working closely with Visit Kent, Swale Tourism, the borough's town councils and other local organisations and web sites.

The Council's Heritage Team and Heritage Champion are committed to raising awareness of the historic environment in Swale Borough up the agenda, both within the Council itself and in wider circles, and will gladly work in partnership with other parties in order to do so. The production of this heritage strategy is a positive first step in this regard, but it is accepted that there is much more that could be done. Further steps to be taken need to be carefully considered, but could for example include some heritage training for Swale Borough councillors and for the members of the town and parish councils in Swale.

More generally, the Council will look to support projects that help to provide access to heritage information, understanding and guidance.

Finally, the Council itself is a significant owner of heritage assets (including two grade II* listed buildings: T.S. Hazard in Faversham, and Court Hall in Milton Regis). As such, as well as working to ensure that other owners play their part in maintaining and where possible enhancing the borough's heritage offer, the Council will as far as its resources allow, seek to set a good example in terms of its stewardship of historic buildings and structures.



90. The T.S. Hazard building, Faversham (a Grade II* Listed Building).

6. Resourcing the Heritage Strategy

6.1: Swale Borough Council's Functions, Role and Resources

Swale Borough Council as the local planning authority has a range of statutory functions for heritage. These include:

- Reviewing and undertaking local designations, such as conservation areas and Article 4 Directions;
- Consulting statutory heritage bodies;
- Preparation of the Local Plan for Swale, including heritage policies;
- Statutory duties in relation to the process for neighbourhood plans;
- Planning enforcement, including to address unauthorised development and action to secure the preservation of heritage at risk;
- Providing a development management service to deal with development proposals affecting heritage assets, through planning applications and listed building consent applications;
- Supporting neighbourhood planning and ensuring that qualifying bodies have a good level of understanding of the economic potential of heritage; and
- Compulsory Purchase Powers, for example to address buildings at risk.

Non-statutory functions could include:

- Creating and maintaining a publicly accessible heritage at risk register;
- Ensuring that heritage consideration is embedded into all local regeneration, economic development, investment and tourism strategies;
- Ensuring that there is a progressive policy and approach to asset transfer, so that community organisations have the opportunity to acquire or lease heritage assets or to work in partnership with the Council to deliver projects involving heritage assets;
- Providing support and/or training to third sector organisations, for example in signposting funding opportunities, project development, advising on funding applications, help with business planning, etc;
- Promoting awareness to heritage-focused and non-heritage-focused bodies of the economic potential of heritage;
- Undertaking training and capacity building with Council officers and elected members to ensure good awareness of the economic and social potential of heritage, not just to tourism, but in supporting enterprise, innovation, civic pride and well-being;
- Ensuring Council owned heritage assets are well managed, well-maintained and in productive use;
- Making information about the historic environment (gathered as part of policy making or development management work) publicly accessible;

- Highlighting the area's distinctive heritage in tourist and visitor marketing and materials; and
- Compiling a list of locally valued buildings/structures of architectural, historic and/or artistic interest, in partnership with local amenity societies.

Many of these roles could also apply to other public sector bodies, especially those that own heritage assets, such as Kent County Council.

The 2012 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was (at the time of writing) most recently updated in February 2019. As well as strengthening the requirement for development sustainability, it appropriately continues to recognize the value of heritage assets from sites and buildings of local importance right up to those of national and international importance, and furthermore, continues to set out clear guidance for how they should be treated in planning terms. It is acknowledged by the local community and the Council that every effort should be made to ensure that any new development proposals are not only as sustainable as possible, but are also designed in a manner sympathetic to enabling the protection and management of the borough's rich built and natural heritage. A more proactive approach is also needed where possible, to ensure that Swale's heritage assets can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of both current and future residents.

The Council has dedicated, albeit modest existing in-house staffing resources available to support and where appropriate, initiate this important work. It was however recognized in the development of this strategy that further resource will be needed to support the significant challenges that lie ahead and to this end, the Council is therefore publicly committed to supporting the first 3 year action plan of this 12 year heritage strategy with an injection of £250,000, to help provide additional heritage specialist capacity and in



91. A members training session

some cases, limited physical works. The additional investment in this respect will be focused on the heritage assets in the Borough that are most at risk through change, neglect and/or development pressure. Furthermore, the Borough Council is aware of the need to properly resource the priorities of the heritage strategy beyond the initial 3 years so that it can have a continual, and potentially momentum building positive effect on heritage conservation in the Borough. It will therefore, wherever possible, work with other agencies, developers and stakeholders to maximize the scope and benefits of this investment and the associated work to be undertaken. In particular, the Council will seek out and where feasible, apply for any match-funding opportunities and capacity building grants that exist.

6.2: External resources (national and local)

THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Owners and Occupiers

Most heritage assets are privately owned or occupied and used by private sector organisations or by individuals, couples and families. Whilst the heritage status is a factor for some, the prime motivation for many in taking on heritage assets is their utility value and/or investment value. Close working and engagement with building owners will therefore be essential to delivering the aims of this strategy. In this respect, the Council recognizes that large areas of the Swale countryside and coastal fringe land is included in major land holdings owned by various companies, estates and other organisations, and that working with such companies, estates and/or organisations to develop heritage management plans may be a particularly fruitful means of helping to ensure the care and enhancement for some of the Borough's heritage.

Development

The development of Swale's historic buildings, towns and areas is undertaken by a range of private building owners, businesses and/or developers. The future of Swale's heritage is therefore dependent to a large extent on private investment decisions. The private sector is often the means to delivering heritage aims, but can also harm heritage if there is not a good level of awareness of the value of heritage combined with a robust design quality assurance provided through the planning system.

THE PUBLIC SECTOR (excluding Swale Borough Council and Kent County Council – already referenced)

Historic England

As the independent adviser to central government on the protection, management and promotion of the historic environment, and the organisation that is now effectively responsible for the designation of key heritage assets including listed buildings and scheduled monuments, Historic England plays a vital role in helping to frame the manner in which all local authorities should seek to manage the historic environment within their respective areas. It provides a significant degree of guidance and research literature to assist local authorities and other parties (including the general public and property owners) and it also provides input to local authorities on development proposals and other matters affecting the most important heritage assets. Historic England also run a variety of training and grant schemes which local authorities and other bodies/groups can tap into to assist with the positive management of the historic environment. The range of grant schemes that Historic England offers varies over time, but the latest information in this respect can be viewed by visiting the Historic England website (see: <https://historicengland.org.uk/services-skills/grants/>).

The National Lottery Heritage Fund

The National Lottery Heritage Fund, (formerly the Heritage Lottery Fund), distributes a share of National Lottery funding, supporting a wide range of heritage projects across the United Kingdom. Since it was set up in 1994, under the National Lottery Act, it has awarded over £7.1 billion to more than 40,000 projects, large and small, helping people across the UK explore, enjoy and protect their heritage.

Town and Parish Councils

Faversham, Queenborough and Sheerness have town councils. There are also numerous parish councils across Swale. Town and parish councils have tax raising powers and can lead on initiatives in their areas to create better services and facilities. Town and parish councils also have statutory planning powers as the qualifying bodies for preparing neighbourhood plans.

THE COMMUNITY (AKA THIRD) SECTOR

Community Organisations in Swale

The Community or Third sector includes voluntary, not-for-profit, social enterprise and other community-led bodies. This includes heritage-focused bodies, like local societies and building preservation trusts, as mentioned in this document. However, there is also potential in Swale for new community land trusts or community development trusts, which could use heritage assets as a basis for their projects.

Community organisations operate independently, but can also work as part of wider partnerships with public and/or private sector bodies, including schools.

Swale is fortunate in having a range of very active, entrepreneurial and ambitious community bodies.

Some of the key regeneration projects and a range of educational initiatives in Swale are led by community organisations. Many heritage sites are similarly managed by community organisations.

The recently formed 'Historic Swale' body clearly has the potential to become a key player in the area, depending on its scope of activity.

Heritage Activities by Community Organisations

Community-led organisations are tackling heritage asset issues and opportunities in various ways:

- developing regeneration projects;
- developing solutions where heritage-assets are not viable for the private sector;
- gaining access to funding, some of which is not be available to private-sector;
- providing local and specialist knowledge and expertise, including on business, tourism and archaeology;
- providing a platform for local volunteering;
- running education initiatives;
- contributing to or leading research on the area's heritage; and
- managing key heritage sites.

6.3: Partnerships (working together)

Partnerships are likely to be required for more complex heritage projects, for example the potential creation of a heritage quarter within the operational part of Sheerness Port, which would have less restricted access.

Partnership working already takes place, for example, in relation to the Dockyard Church in Sheerness, where the Council and Historic England have, and continue to support the Sheerness Dockyard Preservation Trust in its important work to breathe new life and energy back into this severely fire-damaged grade II* listed building.

Third sector involvement in projects can be an effective way of addressing viability challenges, especially in taking on buildings and structures requiring considerable capital investment.

Third sector bodies can access funding for some kinds of capital works not available to local authorities or the private sector.

Conversely, working with developers can sometimes bring valuable development experience and infrastructure to a project.

Complex projects like the regeneration and associated conservation of the historically important dock area at Sheerness Port would likely necessitate a public/private/community sector partnership to be delivered successfully.

Part of the role of the Council in recent years has been to provide support in developing local partnerships, and this will be a role that will continue into the future and is anticipated to become more important.

7. Conclusions and way forward

The focus of this heritage strategy is on having in place a strong framework for, and displaying a solid commitment to the appropriate designation, conservation and positive management of the borough's heritage, and capitalizing on the physical and economic regeneration this can bring. However, part of realising the potential of the area's heritage is in raising awareness, including through interpretation and education. Such actions support the visitor economy, but are also an important benefit for the local community, including for school age children.

Early stakeholder engagement and evidence gathering in relation to the development of this heritage strategy highlighted a range of initiatives already taking place, these being mostly community and volunteer led. Areas for future new work or increased emphasis were also highlighted, including Swale's:

- Medieval and Roman heritage;
- Industrial heritage, including boat building, gunpowder production, paper-making, brickmaking and fruit growing; and
- Maritime, aviation and defence heritage.

Examples of existing community-led facilities that address understanding, interpretation and education are:

Blue Town Heritage Centre: Heritage centre with unusual displays. Various shows and films hosted at the Criterion Theatre, which is part of the heritage centre. The centre includes activities for the elderly and local schools.

The Rose Street Cottage of Curiosities, Sheerness: The only surviving former Royal Naval Dockyard worker cottages conserved and now used to help bring the heritage of the area to life through the Promenade charity in association with Big Fish Arts, and with a particular focus on promoting heritage learning, understanding and appreciation through the medium of art, history and culture, with a regular programme of events.

Eastchurch Aviation Museum: Small museum with planned expansion that works with schools and offenders from the adjacent open prison and provides volunteering opportunities.

Faversham Society: Annual lecture series plus volunteering opportunities at a range of site, and in a range of roles. Runs the Fleur de Lis Heritage centre, which includes a museum, gallery space, book shop and tourist information.

Faversham Town Council: FTC has now taken over from Swale BC in running the local engagement forum, which can cover a whole range of topics, including heritage management. It also runs faversham.org, which provides tourism and heritage information.

Historical Research Group, Sittingbourne: Operates the Sittingbourne Heritage Hub. Annual lecture series, plus volunteering opportunities. They also provide resources (e.g. fact sheets) for schools.

CSI Sittingbourne: A project run by the Canterbury Archaeological Trust aimed at giving members of the public an opportunity to learn the basic skills of archaeological conservation from the Trust's team of experts, initially through the investigation of the Anglo-Saxon burial site excavated at The Meads, in Sittingbourne.

Kent Police Museum, Faversham: This has yet to open, but will be located in the old Victorian Police Station in the town, and is anticipated to open soon. The website advises that they will run a learning programme, and will also provide volunteering opportunities.

Milton Regis Court Hall Museum: Exhibition and volunteering opportunities.

Minster Gatehouse Museum: Recently upgraded exhibition space plus annual lecture series and volunteering opportunities (museum run by volunteers from the Sheppey Local History Society).

As well as supporting and deriving from the heritage related policies and objectives in the adopted Swale Borough Local Plan and helping to ensure that the next version of the Local Plan has every chance of being found sound when that next plan reaches Local Plan Inquiry stage, this heritage strategy has very much been developed to display the Council's commitment to supporting existing local groups and initiatives that seek to promote, protect and/or enhance the historic environment in Swale Borough and in particular improve understanding. It is anticipated that the set of actions proposed in this heritage strategy's first action plan will complement the work of many of the aforementioned heritage focused local groups and initiatives and will go some way to ensuring that the historic environment in Swale receives the recognition, protection and positive management it deserves, given the benefits it brings to Swale Borough.

It can be seen from the actions set out in the first 3-year Action Plan, and will be seen in the following Action Plans, that the 5 priorities of the Council derived from the 3 strategy strands in this Heritage Strategy will all work towards the high level vision of achieving 'A vibrant and widely-known heritage which is valued for its own sake and for the long term benefits it provides to the people, economy and environment of the Borough of Swale'.

The Council recognizes that the Borough has particular strengths in a number of the key heritage themes outlined in this strategy document, and that coordination of activities and initiatives on these can reap better rewards for the Borough, so this will be a key driver for consideration of Council-led project/initiatives and those of local groups/societies that the Council chooses to support.

To maximize the range of potential benefits from heritage related projects and initiatives, partnership working will be utilized wherever possible, but in particular, where this would aid in the development of grant funding bids to support project work. Furthermore, wherever possible, ways will be sought to help maximize the capacity and ability of third

parties (including the local community and interest groups) to help deliver projects.

A necessary first step in all of this was seeking and taking on board constructive feedback in the development of this Heritage Strategy and initial 3-year Action Plan. This has been done and in terms of balancing all the new requests for projects and initiatives and suggestions for the re-ordering the priorities of those items proposed in the draft Action Plan, the Council believes that it has gone as far as it can in seeking to match the plans and aspirations of the various communities that make up the Borough.

The Council will initially move forward with those projects/initiatives set out in Action Plan 1 and in developing the future action plans, it will continue to bear in mind the correlation between the key heritage themes in this document and the activities /stakeholders that are concerned with them, as these may assist the Council in identifying opportunities to coordinate and ensure the greatest benefits can be achieved.



92. *Minster Abbey Gatehouse Museum*
(a Grade II Listed Building, forming part of the scheduled remains of
the former nunnery at this site).

8. Implementation, Monitoring and Review

8.1 Heritage Strategy Action Plans (Triennial rolling plans over the lifetime of the strategy)

Without a planned set of actions and a clear commitment and resource to implement such actions, this heritage strategy, although setting out an arguably laudable high level vision and set of associated objectives and priorities would nevertheless amount in practice, to little more than words. Particularly in this day and age, the need for positive action is understood, and as such, to help translate this heritage strategy into reality, a set of three-year action plans will be produced and implemented over the 12 year life span of the strategy, between 2020 and 2032.

The first triennial action plan is attached as Appendix I to this strategy, and this has been finalised with changes taken on board following the public consultation that took place at the end of the 2019 and the beginning of 2020 – changes which include some additional projects and some re-ordering of the prioritisation of projects.

It is intended that subsequent action plans 2, 3 and 4, will be produced in the final year of the preceding action plan and consultation will take place to again ensure that those actions being put forward are ones which are supported by the local community as a whole.

8.2 Monitoring Framework & Strategy Review

To ensure that the Council and its project partners (where applicable) learn valuable lessons in the types of actions/interventions and initiatives which are successful, or not as the case may sometimes be, the Council will produce a monitoring report early in the final year of each three-year action plan period. These monitoring reports will necessarily be kept concise and will be made publically available to view via a link on the Council's Heritage Strategy web page.

It is planned that the monitoring report will be produced by the Council's Heritage Team, although contributions from partner organisation (where applicable) will be sought, and whilst these reports will not be subject to public consultation, any constructive comments received by the Council in relation to a heritage strategy action will be given careful consideration and may be used to help shape the content of the report.

It is planned that the monitoring reports would be produced in advance of consultation on the next action plan, as it is believed that having such information available may help to establish the next set of actions on a more informed basis. However, due to continuing challenging workload levels for the Council's small Heritage Team, this may not always be possible.

Finally, the life of this heritage strategy is necessarily finite. It is planned to have a life of 12 years (spanning between 2020 and 2032) and that it will be fully reviewed and updated during the implementation of the final three-year action plan (Action Plan 4). However, it is accepted that fundamental shifts in different areas (e.g. government policy, local policy and resources) may effectively force the Council to fully review this heritage strategy sooner than planned. Minor changes to external factors will unlikely need to result in the strategy itself being amended, but may well result in changes to the series of action plans.

Acknowledgements

This Heritage Strategy was written by the Council's Heritage Team with the grateful support of officers from other teams within the organisation and the detailed positive feedback provided by Historic England and Kent County Council's Heritage Conservation Team. The substantive constructive input of the following local groups and societies, local businesses and organisations and local residents is also acknowledged and much appreciated:

Local Groups & Societies

Blue Town Heritage Centre
 Borden Heritage Group
 Eastchurch Aviation Museum
 Faversham Society (The)
 Friends of Court Hall
 Historical Research Group of Sittingbourne
 Minster Gatehouse Museum
 Murston All Saints Trust
 Newington History Group
 Oare Heritage Harbour Group
 Rotary Club of Sittingbourne
 Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway
 Sittingbourne Society (The)
 Swale Community Centres

Local Businesses & Organisations

Bobbing Parish Council
 Borden Parish Council
 Bredgar Parish Council
 D.S. Smith (Kemsley) Ltd
 Dunkirk Parish Council
 Eastchurch Parish Council
 Frognal Farmhouse Ltd
 G. H. Dean & Co. Ltd
 Green Cube CIC
 Iwade Parish Council
 Kent County Council Heritage Conservation Team
 Kent Downs AONB Unit
 Medway Swale Estuary Partnership
 Milstead Parish Council
 Newington Parish Council
 Nixox Ltd
 Peel Ports Group
 Rodmersham Parish Council
 Shepherd Neame Ltd
 Swan Quay LLP

Local Residents

Graham & Barbara Addicott
 Helen Allinson
 Sarah Belsom
 Roger Betts
 David Crompton
 John Davies
 Damian Goodburn
 Dana Goodburn-Brown
 Debbie Haigh
 Eileen Harrison
 Matthew Hatchwell
 Sheila & John Hepburn
 Mavis Hibben
 Elaine Jackson
 Edward Knight
 Cllr. Stephen Palmer
 Jennifer Moore
 Elizabeth Moulard
 Kay Murphy
 Tony Pointing
 Vivien Rich
 Louisa Roberts
 Peter & Valerie Rook
 Ann Sefton
 Roger Sills
 Alan Smith
 Barry Standen
 Keith Tress
 Dana Wiffen

Appendices

Appendix I

Heritage Strategy Action Plan 1 (2020 – 2023)

To view visit: www.swale.gov.uk/swale-heritage-strategy or view separate hard copy document.

Appendix II

Swale Heritage at Risk Baseline (2020) Register

To view visit: www.swale.gov.uk/heritage-at-risk or view separate hard copy document.



Contacting Swale Borough Council

The Customer Service Centre deals with all enquiries across the Council; it should be your first stop when contacting us.

Call 01795 417850.

Copies of this strategy are available on the council website: www.swale.gov.uk/swale-heritage-strategy

Front cover: Milton Court Hall, Milton Regis, Sittingbourne – Swale Borough Council's grade II* listed building at the heart of the Milton Regis High Street Conservation Area.

Back cover: Saxon brooch found during the archaeological investigation work at The Meads, Bobbing, Sittingbourne. Image provided courtesy of Simon Mason.