

4. Valuing Our Parish Landscape

- 4.1 The village of Kelsall is situated on the west facing slopes of the Mid-Cheshire Ridge, also known as the Sandstone Ridge, which extends for approximately 28 kms, from Frodsham/Helsby in the north to the Larkton hills in the south. This ridge effectively divides the Cheshire plain into a western and an eastern sector. Kelsall's landscape setting in the distinctive pass is unique. Today that landscape is enjoyed by all who travel along the scenic bypass of the village which for decades was known for heavily congested traffic winding up the hill.
- 4.2 Today's nucleated village has evolved from a scattering of hamlets, isolated farms and cottages in the valley from Lower Kelsall to Kelsall Hill. It is this distinctive valley, rising eastwards, which determines the shape and character of the settlement. Indeed it is the valley which probably gave rise to part of the place name since *halgh* means a nook or valley - hence *Kelsall*. Nearby is the site of Kelsborrow, recorded as the site of a prehistoric fortified outlook, but who Kel might have been remains a mystery.
- 4.3 The initial workshop held in February 2005 focused on the landscape features of the parish resulting in a selection of photographs and a detailed consideration of the geology and topography. In addition in May 2005 Year 6 pupils at Kelsall Community School undertook a project exploring Kelsall's Landscape Story. All the pupils contributed to an evening of presentations and a group of outstanding landscape paintings together with a selection of the children's written work including the poem below (p.13).
- 4.4 This Project demonstrated the best of learning experiences. It involved children and adults in re-discovering their sense of place. The research, discussion, painting, writing, IT work and presentation of their discoveries about their place, engaged their heads, their hearts and their hands. Children discovered new aspects of the landscape they live in and shared old experiences of it. They learned how to paint a picture of value of their landscape in ways that other members of the community and planners must pay attention to.



KELSALL SPEAKS
a poem by Year 6 Kelsall Community School
Pupils (2005)

*My name is Kelsall, my surname is Village.
 I came from God's making of the world.
 I live in the green of the Cheshire Plain.
 I stand very still on a hill, all day and night.
 I have greying eyes of my mystic past.
 My hair is the green of grass.
 I love the fuzzy rain on my tongue.
 Water gives me my strength.
 I am both right and left handed.
 My hobby is watching the sun rise and set.
 My pets are the sheep and cattle.*

*I have visited no foreign countries, I only travel
 through time.
 My occupation is to shelter people from wind
 and rain.
 I don't get any payment but my reward is bigger
 than money.
 I never go on holiday because I am happy
 where I am.
 I like listening to darkness and watching myself
 grow.
 I dislike the sound of mourning. I sweep it away.
 My worst subject is pollution.
 I am scared of fire and flood.*

*I can't cook but I watch people get the
 ingredients.
 My favourite food is cloud ice-cream.
 My brother's names are Tarvin and Delamere.
 My family is bigger than you can imagine.
 I'm not married. I got a divorce from Ashton a
 few years ago.
 I am engaged to Willington.
 My idol is Alderley Edge.
 My favourite colour is the rainbow.
 My favourite drink is the dew.
 The wind is my favourite singer.
 My favourite author is the sun.
 My heroes are the people who maintain me.
 I lost count of my age 50 years ago.
 I am as old as Cheshire.
 And I carry the eyes of the sky.
 I am here so people will have a place to live.*

4.5 The Parish of Kelsall is not synonymous with the village. The boundary to the north extends along Longley Hill to Woodside and to the west a substantial distance out beyond

the village onto the plain towards Tarvin. It is only on the east and south sides that the Parish boundary is contiguous with the built area.

- 4.6 The valley, eroded along NNE-SSW fault lines in the Triassic rocks which form the Sandstone ridge, has an asymmetric cross-profile. This has influenced the road patterns which can be observed in the village. The steep scarp above Quarry lane, with its distinctive tree-lined skyline sweeping round to the summit of Kelsborrow, gives the housing on this side of the valley commanding views NW to the Clwydian hills and the Mersey estuary. The gentler slopes of the SE facing valley side and lower valley have meant fewer constraints on building so that here the village has expanded.
- 4.7 Whilst there are outcrops of sandstone, which have been extensively quarried in the past, and some sandy soils, much of the valley has been infilled by a thick layer of glacial boulder clay. Likewise, the plain stretching westwards from Lower Kelsall is coated with thick deposits of the same clay, which gave rise to the evolution of the traditional dairy farming patterns of Cheshire. The many ponds or pits, which dot the landscape of the plain, were excavated to extract marl. This mineral rich material was used to improve the poorer sandy soils until the development of fertilizer. No longer used to provide water for stock, the remaining ponds are now valued for wildlife habitat.
- 4.8 The Parish Landscape Assessment has established 5 landscape character types within Kelsall Parish: Ridge, Scarp, Valley, Scarp Foot and Plain as shown in the map 2 and the adjacent table.
- 4.9 Whilst the main settlement is concentrated in the valley, potential for development in each of these landscape types needs to be considered and therefore recommendations from the detailed Parish Landscape Assessment are included here.

Map 2: Kelsall Civil Parish Showing the Detailed Topography and Landscape Character Types

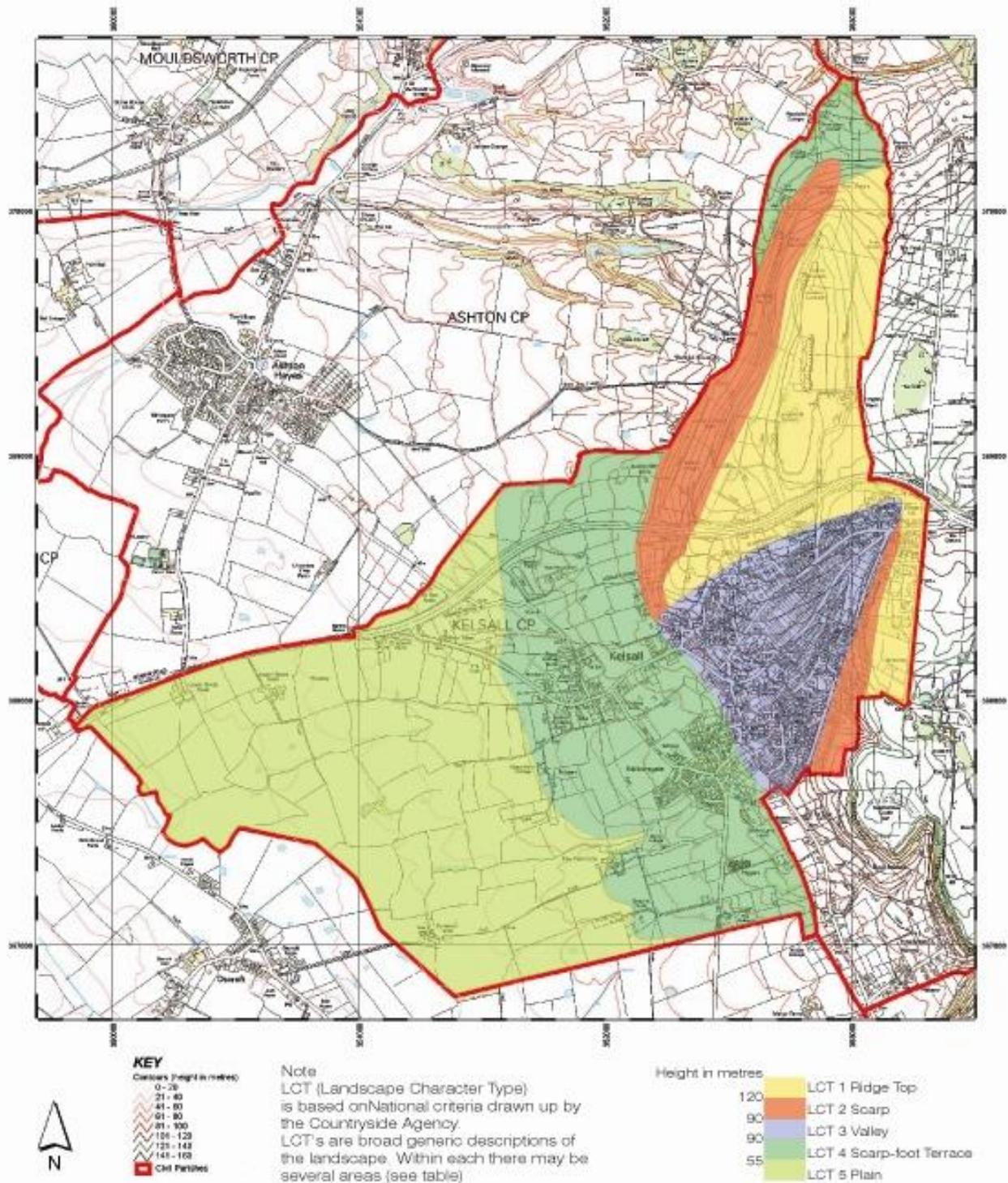


Table 1: Landscape Character Types in Kelsall Parish

LANDSCAPE TYPE 1: RIDGE TOP/ UPPER SCARP	
<p>Landscape Character Area: Longley Hill</p> <p>Key characteristics Regular fields – hawthorn hedges Farm settlement Disused quarry – hilltop Fruit fields Grazing land Grade 3 Agricultural land, [DEFRA]</p>	<p>Description Ridge top with upper slopes dipping to Woodside. Remains of field system. Dip slope E to stream valley forming parish boundary. 1 public footpath crossing SW end of scarp, no public access onto Longley hill, one of Kelsall's pre-enclosure Commons.</p>
<p>LCA Waste Lane/Kelsborrow Castle</p> <p>Key characteristics Private housing with large gardens Small/medium fields, hawthorn hedges Pasture – grazing-cattle Grade 3 Agricultural land [DEFRA]</p>	<p>Description East facing dip slope with views to Organsdale. Public footpath climbs scarp to Waste Lane with access to Sandstone Trail. Ridge top views W to plain and Clwydian range</p>
LANDSCAPE TYPE 2: SCARP	
<p>LCA Longley Wood/Dodd's Rough</p> <p>Key characteristics Two narrow bands of woodland on steep slopes Longley Wood and Dodd's Rough, which is a Site of Biological Importance (SBI). Other land is Grade 3 Ag. Land [DEFRA].</p>	<p>Description West facing scarp, tree covered on steepest slopes. Semi-natural woodland partly under planted with conifers. Disused quarry in wooded area. Valued wildlife habitat. Pasture and fruit fields crossed by public footpath. S end crossed by bypass. Housing into village.</p>
<p>LCA Quarry Lane</p> <p>Key Characteristics Steep scarp slope Disused quarry Commanding views to NW Linear settlement</p>	<p>Description Diversity of housing styles including sandstone cottages, substantial residences with large mature gardens and more recent individual infill development</p>
LANDSCAPE TYPE 3. VALLEY	
<p>LCA KELSALL VILLAGE</p> <p>Key characteristics Asymmetric valley-NNE/SSW Built up, diverse styles, little open space. Distinct nucleated form, shape determined by valley topography.</p>	<p>Description Largest of 3 valleys in W side of SS ridge, etched along fault lines. Valley leads to low saddle through which road routes pass W/E. Evolution into nucleated form from string of hamlets and smallholdings. Many sandstone features including walls and building materials</p>

LANDSCAPE TYPE 4. SCARP FOOT TERRACE	
<p>LCA Common Lane/Flat Lane</p> <p>Key characteristics Gentle slope 90 – 55m. Mix of regular/irregular medium sized fields. Grade 2 Agricultural land,[DEFRA] Hawthorn hedges/fences/individual trees – mainly oak. Pasture, arable, fodder crops</p>	<p>Description W facing edge of parish where steep slope meets plain, allowing access to both higher and lower land. Area includes oldest farmstead in the parish. Location of Hallowsgate seeded around former farm. Early zone of village expansion. Footpath network linking with Oscroft and Tarvin.</p>
<p>LCA Lower Kelsall, Hollands Lane To Woodside</p> <p>Key characteristics Gentle slope 90 -55m Mix of fields, largely rectangular. Land use as above</p>	<p>Description Location of Lower Kelsall Design Includes Conservation Area Open W aspect from Hollands Lane Views along ridge.</p>
LANDSCAPE TYPE 5. PLAIN	
<p>LCA Parish Plain</p> <p>Key characteristics Gently undulating plain below 55m. Larger more rectangular fields, hawthorn hedges and standard trees. Heavy clay based soils. Pasture & arable fodder crops. Ponds. 5 farms located on this area.</p>	<p>Description Part of the Cheshire Plain, coated with glacial boulder clay. Open aspect – with only scattered farmsteads between fields with mature trees in hedgerows. Provides splendid views of the village in its nook. Creates space from nearest other settlements</p>

Recommendations from the Parish Landscape Statement

1. The Ridge

“The rural surroundings” and “Views to the West” are much valued by Kelsall residents as recorded in their responses at the first public meeting. These views form a major element of “what makes Kelsall special”. It is recommended that any future development should harmonise with, and not detract from those views. This is particularly sensitive since the elevated nature of 2/3 of the Parish does confer on it a special place in the landscape of Western Cheshire.

The summit of Longley Hill, with its fine panoramic views, now has access in the network of public rights of way. Permissive access to a view point on Longley Hill will be greatly valued by residents of Kelsall, Ashton Hayes and Delamere and indeed the wider public who walk the Mid Cheshire Ridge.

2. The Scarp

Quarry Lane forms an important boundary between the scarp and the valley. The westerly views, due to the scarp’s elevated position, are especially valued. It is recommended that these views be safeguarded from obstruction through any future development since they are a prime factor in contributing to the local distinctiveness of Kelsall.

3. The Valley

The built –up area of the village is distinctly aligned with the valley. We recommend that it should not be allowed to spread upwards and alter the existing features of the skyline. Importantly, new building within the existing settlement should not obscure views for the public. Furthermore the mass of new building should not be so great that it masks the natural contour of the valley.

4. The Scarp Foot

The open nature of the views from these areas are notable for their breadth to E & W as well as N & S along the base of the Sandstone Ridge. It is recommended that the maintenance of their open aspect should be of paramount consideration.

5. The Plain

This area with its agricultural characteristics of fields, hedgerows, hedgerow trees and ponds is a valued part of the Kelsall landscape. Its attractions are particularly apparent when travelling west down the Kelsall by-pass. It is recommended that the features of this landscape be sustained and where feasible its elements enhanced.



1. The Ridge



2. The Scarp



3. The Valley



4. The Scarp Foot



5. The Plain

4.10 Based on the above the policy recommendation is therefore:

SPD Recommendation 1

Within Kelsall Parish proposals that contribute towards local distinctiveness will be encouraged. Proposals should be judged against the recommendations from the Landscape Statement above and contained in Appendix 3 and should meet the following criteria:

- a) any proposed development on the Ridge should harmonise with and not detract from the panoramic setting.
- b) the views from the Scarp be safeguarded from obstruction through further development.
- c) the built up area of the Valley should not be allowed to spread upwards to alter the existing features of the skyline.
- d) new buildings or extensions within the existing settlement should not obscure views for the public.
- e) the mass of new building should not be so great that it masks the natural contours of the Valley.
- f) the open aspect across the Scarp Foot should be of paramount consideration the agricultural landscape features of the Plain be sustained and its elements enhanced.

(Local Plan GE7, ENV2 and Planning Policy Statement 7)