

# DRAFTING OF RESPONSE TO CONSUTATION ON INCLUSION OF DOCKENFIELD HILLS AREA INTO THE AONB

## **PART A** ...About you {DPC not individual.}

NB A3: Tick Dockenfield is “in one of the extension areas” (EXCEPT great Holt which is “Surrey outside AONB”)

## **PART B**. Overall comments

Dockenfield Hills box – YES ( or Yes but comment on boundary)

## **PART C**. Proposed extension area

NAME – Dockenfield hills

### **C1: Sufficient natural beauty?**

YES

The response to the call for evidence provided good examples from the parishioners of the Natural Beauty required to be demonstrated to the Natural England surveyors. The proposed area (c. 1.5km wide) links the existing AONB boundary in the east with the South Downs National Park to the west, thus providing a contiguous meta-scale area of already recognised natural beauty, with considerable public access.

### **C2: Any information missing?**

YES

There is an area on the southern boundary of Dockenfield Parish which was excluded at the end of surveying the original larger Evaluation area principally we understand due to the lack of hard boundaries along parts of the Surrey/Hampshire County boundary (which had perhaps been the original intended boundary). In withdrawing northwards to a simple ‘safe’ road boundary, consideration of the considerable assets of both the open pastures with trees/hedges to the south and secondly the large Country House complex of Great Holt with its gardens and grounds was excluded. The site is a redevelopment commissioned by the wealthy local brewing family of Watney/Combe to extensively enlarge an existing farm house of 1749. The Estate has interesting cultural and architectural links to the area. It is mentioned in the historic Architectural Encyclopaedia “Buildings of England” by Nikolaus Pevsner. The main house was built in 1904 by a local family of builders of three generations; Chuter and Sons, who were active from the 1870’s to the 1950’s and responsible for a number of distinguished properties in the area. The house is constructed in the Arts and Crafts architectural style, with adjoining Coach House, in same architectural genre as Frensham heights (now a school and also included in

this candidate area] and Dockenfield church (designed by Curtis Green). Ancient oaks and remnants of parkland fencing are present around the boundary of Great Holt along with a framing grove of Scots pine that have now come to maturity. A number of garden terraces to the south and a ha-ha were created, following the natural lines of the hill. The main drive to the property is framed by mature horse-chestnuts. To the west is also an interesting graveyard where a Russian Princess is buried.

Given the AONB criteria it would seem evident the southern boundary of the proposed AONB should encompass both the extensive open pastures (shown in the main AONB report cover photograph) and the historic context of the house, gardens and grounds of Great Holt. All able to be bounded by hard features, including sections of the County boundary which contribute approximately two thirds of the overall length.

### **C3 Desirable to designate as AONB due to natural beauty?**

YES

The response to the call for evidence provided good examples from the parishioners of Dockenfield and Frensham of the Natural Beauty required to be demonstrated to the Natural England surveyors; and the surveyors concurred following their visit. The proposed area (c. 1.5km wide) conjoins the existing AONB boundary in the east with the South Downs National Park to the west, thus providing a contiguous meta-scale area joining two already designated areas of recognised natural beauty, with considerable public access.

### **C4 Any other important information to be included?**

YES

There is an area on the southern boundary of Dockenfield Parish which was excluded at the end of the surveying the original larger Evaluation area; principally we understand due to the lack of hard boundaries along parts of the Surrey/Hampshire County boundary (which had perhaps been the original intended boundary). In withdrawing northwards to a simple 'safe' road boundary consideration of the considerable assets of both the open pastures with trees/hedges to the south and secondly the large Country House complex of Great Holt with its gardens and grounds was excluded. The site is a redevelopment commissioned by the wealthy local brewing family of Watney/Combe to extensively enlarge an existing farm house of 1749. The Estate has interesting cultural and architectural links to the area. It is mentioned in the historic Architectural Encyclopaedia "Buildings of England" by Nikolaus Pevsner. The main house was built in 1904 by a local family of builders of three generations; Chuter and Sons, who were active from the 1870's to the 1950's and responsible for a number of distinguished properties in the area. The

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Given the AONB criteria it would seem evident the proposed southern boundary of the proposed extension should encompass both the extensive open pastures (shown as the cover photograph for the main AONB report by NE) and the historic context of the house, gardens and grounds of Great Holt. All able to be bounded by hard features, with sections of the County boundary contributing almost two thirds of the overall length.

## **C5**

Wish to suggest alternative boundary?

### **Tick box - Suggest alternative boundary**

There is an area on the southern boundary of the Dockenfield Hills proposal which was removed at the end of the surveying the larger Evaluation area (extending c. 1km into Hampshire), principally because of the lack of hard boundaries in sections along the Surrey-Hampshire county boundary (which may have been the original intended boundary) and secondly containing two AONB non-compliant patches. Firstly, in withdrawing northwards to a 'safe' road boundary the considerable assets southwards that had been highlighted by the parishioners and the Parish Council, including the Great Holt area was left out.

Secondly, the contraction of the proposed boundary northwards also removes the attractive open pastureland vista with trees and hedges and examples of geological events creating natural beauty – river meanders creating two oxbow lake features. These are close to the public ROW network and easily seen from it.

Three reasons for exclusion were put forward in the report:

1. The relatively recent change in a tiny length of the course of the river Wey (the County boundary) forming two oxbow lakes – though in law the County boundary automatically alters with such river course change. However, from the river there is no defined boundary SW for c.150m from point 'A' to 'B' on the map below.
2. Other lengths of the Surrey/Hampshire County boundary (which may have apparently been the original intended boundary) do not have hard features – e.g. C - D and the small segment E on the map. In consultation with local parishioners,

Dockenfield Parish Council suggest an alternative boundary design can easily be made incorporating defined 'hard' boundaries [hedged field edges, copse] whilst much of this proposal is also 'hard' County boundary.

3. Reference was made to 2 locations that may elicit fundamental non-AONB characteristics. Both of these are in Hampshire, not Dockenfield. Both were in the original extended Evaluation area but outside the Parish - and our suggested alternative boundary.

A. *Horse-culture near to Gum hill, Hampshire.* Within the original large evaluation area. This cannot easily be seen from anywhere in our proposed AONB extension, even in winter, being hidden by trees and hedges.

B. *The sand quarry at Grooms farm Hampshire.* Partly within the original large evaluation area. Approximately 1km SW of the proposed boundary. Again, this cannot be seen from anywhere in our proposed addition to the AONB-extension-proposal document. Secondly and importantly the site is due for exhaustion of sand and complete restoration to wildlife habitat by December 2024. Dockenfield parishioners are on the liaison committee. We suggest conclusion of works is likely to precede the final SOS decision on the Surrey Hills AONB extension or will be very shortly after it. Nevertheless, it cannot be seen.

Our proposed extension south of Old Lane (in fact the title page picture of the whole Surrey Hills AONB Consultation document shows this area south of Old Lane currently to be excluded !) enables close viewing of the oxbow lakes; the Great Holt parkland complex and the interesting graveyard is contained within hard boundaries as detailed below. An accompanying annotated map and Google aerial photo provide the overview and the locations of a set of photographs show the boundary detail. This includes the alternative sections where the County boundary is undefined.

Starting at the Northeast :

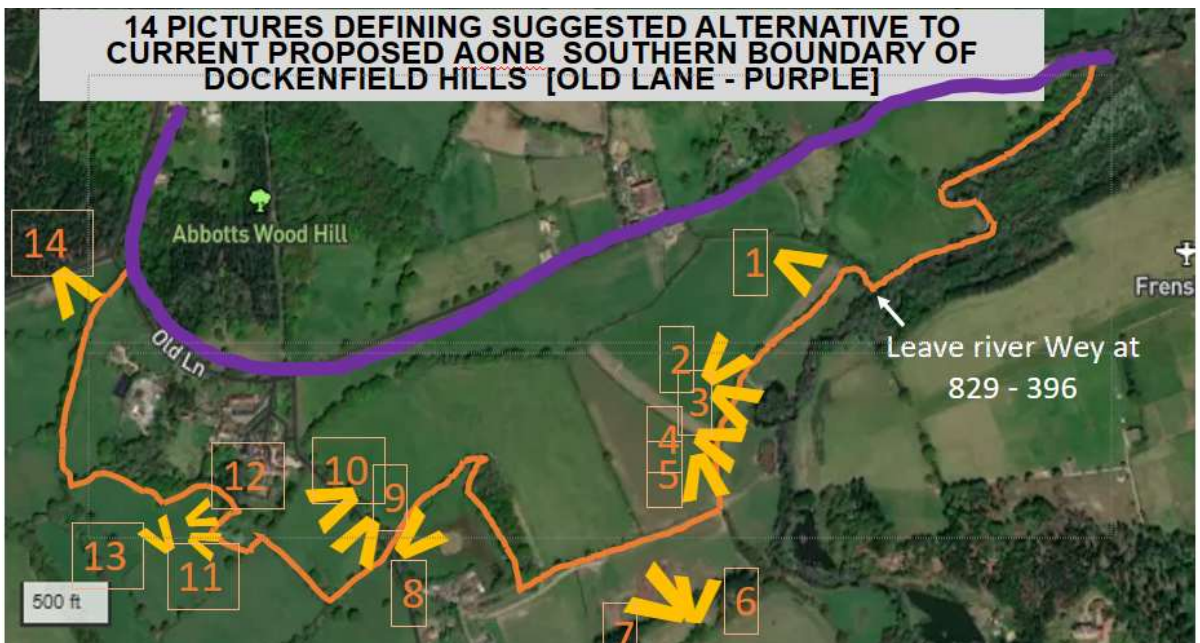
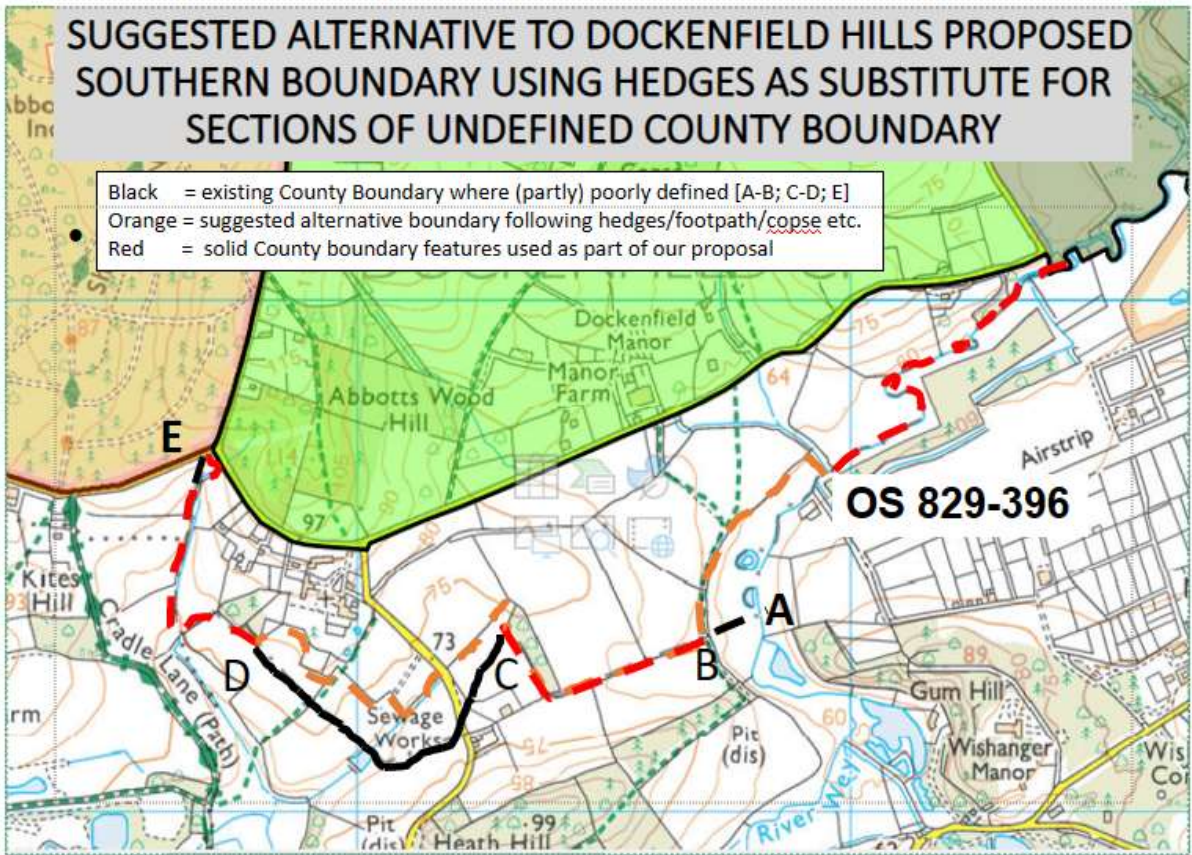
The established river course (red dashes on map) as the County boundary has not varied. At Grid ref 829-396 an alternative stream /field hedge boundary can be followed NNW then WSW [Orange]. This substitutes for the short length of undefined County boundary at point 'A' between the river and the hedged County boundary at 'B'.

The field hedge/public ROW 58 then runs SW until it hits the County boundary at point 'B' and then our proposal follows that boundary hedge (red) WSW until the small copse, where the County boundary turns NNW. Instead of the County boundary crossing an open field at C, the proposal follows the northern edge of the copse then turns SW along a strong hedge, crosses the lane and along a mature hedge with trees. Turns NW along field boundary with mature trees, crosses ROW 57, then follows the Great Holt [western] mature boundary hedge before re-joining

the County boundary hedgerow (red dashes) at point 'D'. Proposed boundary follows it [with boundary oaks] NW then NNE approximately to the Junction of High Thicket Lane and Old Lane – hedged all the way whilst substituting for the short length of undefined County boundary at 'E'.

We suggest this is both a reasonable and practical fully defined boundary to include both the important attractive countryside assets and those within the Great Holt area whilst incorporating the 'hard' County boundary line where appropriate.

Maps and pictures follow



Picture 1: Hedge with stream coming up NW from river Wey then hedge SW parallel to river Wey



Picture 2: hedge parallel to river



**Pic 3.** Oxbow lake from ROW footpath 58. Trees hiding Gum hill. Mature hedge in foreground is proposed boundary



**Pic 4.** Second oxbow lake from footpath, river Wey behind. Trees hiding Gum hill. Poorly defined County boundary [blue]





**Pic 5.** Footpath 58 and hedge/ditch-bank beside running SW. At far end of dashed line a hedge runs west along County Boundary.



**Pic 6.** From Heath hill NNE showing footpath 58 [pic 5] in orange. Suggested boundary & County boundary X-Y [black]. Undefined C.B. in open field [pic 4] in blue



Pic 7. Follows pic 6 from Heath hill NW along County Boundary hedge to S edge of copse at left.



Pic 8. County boundary is west edge of copse at right. Undefined C.B SW across open field [blue]. Proposed boundary to N tip of copse and SW along mature hedge to lane (hedgerow aligned beyond, Pic 9).



Pic 9. Crossing the lane mature hedge runs SW, then NW towards Great Holt.



Pic 10. Hedge leading NW to Great Holt boundary towards area of veteran trees etc. Footpath 57 E-W along Great Holt boundary [orange]



Pic 11. Hedge bounding Great Holt, ESE aspect.  
Footpath runs NE-SW [orange]



Pic 12. Two corners of hedge leading NNE then NW as Great Holt boundary and area of old Scots pine trees etc.



**Pic 13.** Hedge W of Great Holt with old trees. Rejoins defined County boundary running E-W [orange]



**Pic 14.** County boundary hedge with mature trees leading SSW from near Old lane/High thicket lane junction towards Great Holt western boundary. Strong hedge substitutes for c. 50m of undefined county boundary in blue

