

# Green Ridge, Windmill Walk and Coney Wood



## SITES OF NATURE CONSERVATION IMPORTANCE



KEEP THE RIDGE GREEN

Green Ridge is a well-used countryside landscape situated north of the built-up area of Brighton & Hove. The site has a wild and natural feel typical of a high downland ridge. Consisting mainly of managed grassland, it is dominated by Patcham Windmill and is rich in wildlife. It offers the opportunity to enjoy spectacular all around views and public access makes it a popular site to experience and appreciate nature.

Coney Hill includes both open farmland and Coney Wood. The woodland was opened to the public to replace land lost after Mill Road was realigned due to the construction of the A27. Forming part of the South Downs, this area covers about 9 hectares (22 acres) most of which is public open space. It provides an important link across to Waterhall over Mill Road and the A27 via a footpath.

The site is informally used for quiet recreation including walking, exercising dogs, jogging and kite flying. There are extensive views northwest towards Devil's Dyke, east to Standean and south over the city to the sea. Jack & Jill windmills at Clayton can be glimpsed in the distance.

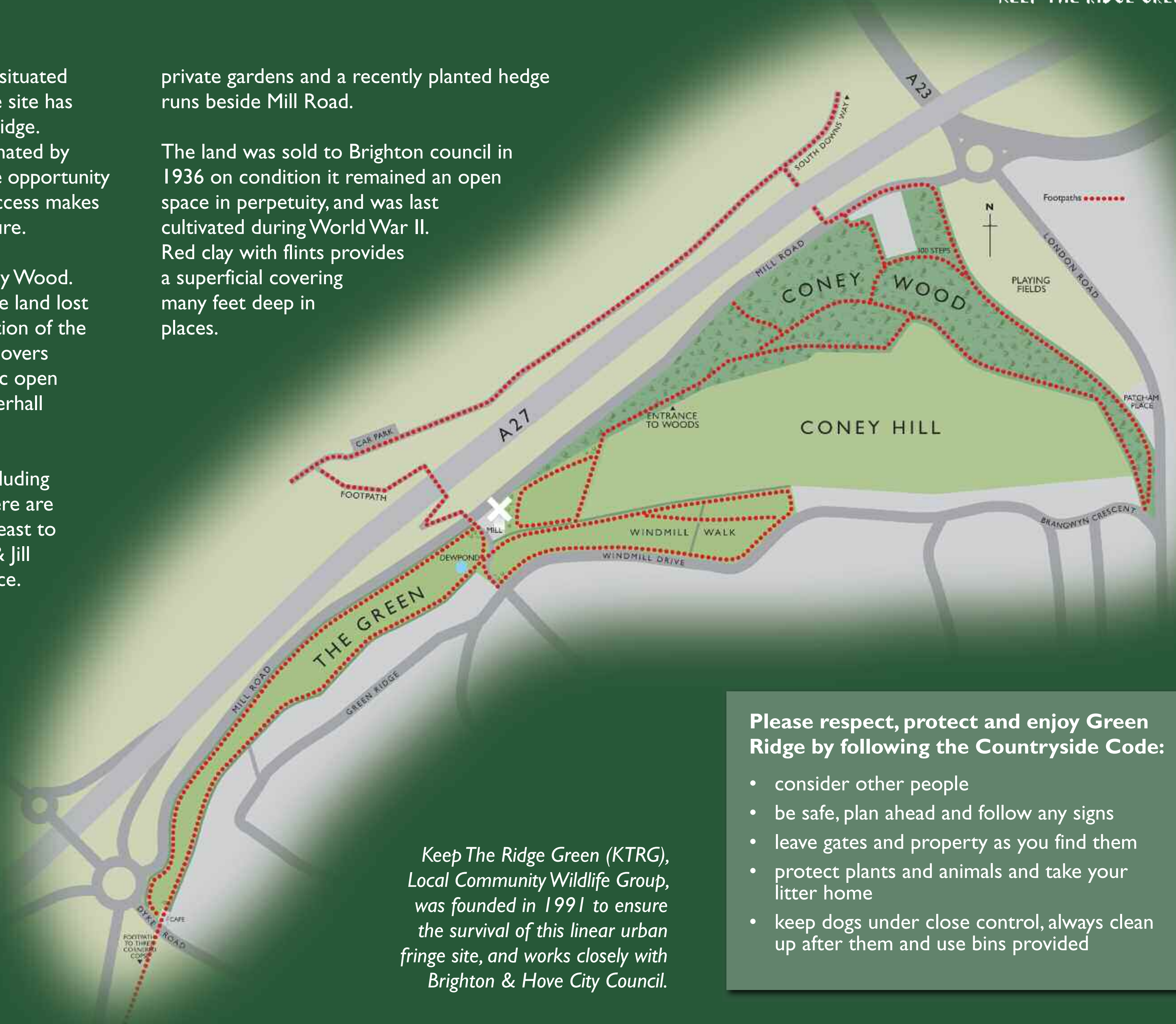
Mown paths through the meadow, hedgerows and dew pond area create an important 'stepping stone' between two wooded sites. The Three Cornered Copse is located just across Dyke Road and eastwards, Coney Wood drops down to Patcham Place.

A Saxon boundary hedge provides historical value and appears on the West Blatchington Estate plans of 1829. It shows Green Ridge (then known as Mill Road open space) to be the corner of 'North Down Pasture'.

The ancient hedge forms its southern boundary. This hedgerow now separates the Green from

private gardens and a recently planted hedge runs beside Mill Road.

The land was sold to Brighton council in 1936 on condition it remained an open space in perpetuity, and was last cultivated during World War II. Red clay with flints provides a superficial covering many feet deep in places.



**Please respect, protect and enjoy Green Ridge by following the Countryside Code:**

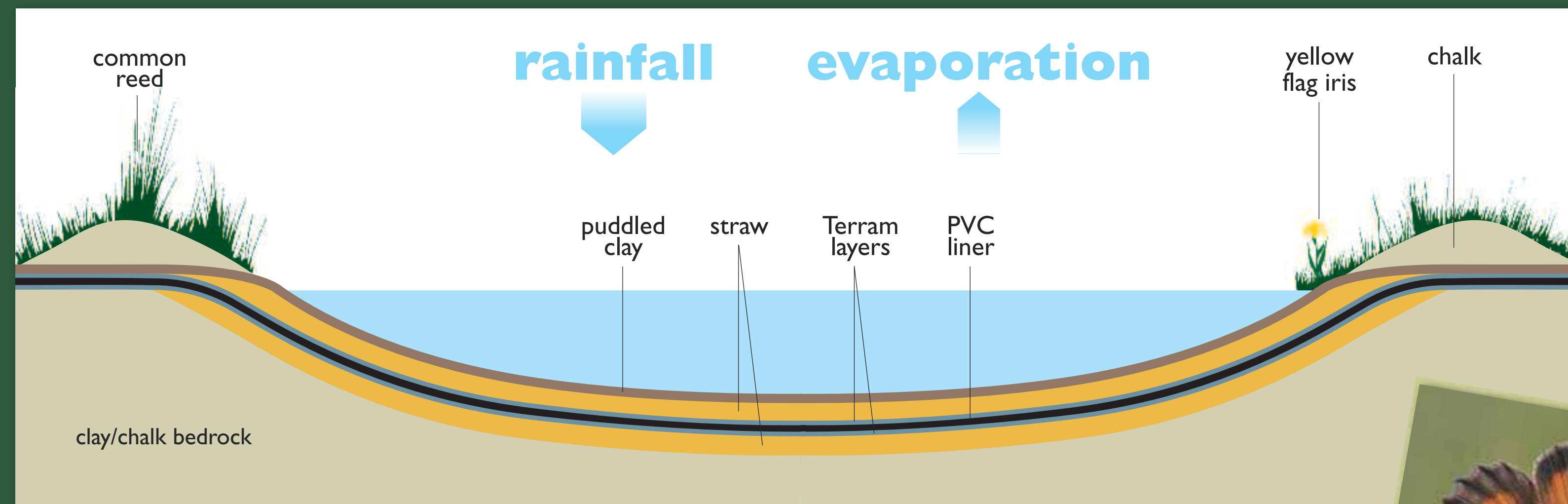
- consider other people
- be safe, plan ahead and follow any signs
- leave gates and property as you find them
- protect plants and animals and take your litter home
- keep dogs under close control, always clean up after them and use bins provided

*Keep The Ridge Green (KTRG), Local Community Wildlife Group, was founded in 1991 to ensure the survival of this linear urban fringe site, and works closely with Brighton & Hove City Council.*



# Green Ridge Dew Pond

## Cross-section of the dew pond



Dew ponds are traditional hill ponds used for watering sheep before the advent of piped water and troughs. Besides being significant landscape features they provide an important natural habitat for flora and fauna, which is why disturbance by dogs or the presence of goldfish is undesirable.

The South Downs are made of porous chalk so in order to hold water, a layer of non-porous impervious clay is 'puddled' into a chalk depression. A modern technique for restoring

dew ponds is to put a liner underneath the clay. This holds water should the clay crack during hot, dry weather.

Unusually Green Ridge has a natural 'clay cap' several feet deep in places.

Folklore has provided the name 'dew pond' but although dew and mist do contribute a small amount of water, the vast majority comes from rainfall. Water is retained in all but the driest summers because evaporation is normally less than annual rainfall.

Brighton & Hove City Council Cityparks rangers helped us celebrate the new millennium by restoring this pond, one of many to be found on the Downs..

## Wildlife and vegetation

Green Ridge and Coney Wood interconnect with other local green spaces to help provide the wildlife corridors around our city, where insects, plants, birds and animals are able to travel along hedgerows and through vegetation to mix with others of their kind elsewhere, so strengthening regional biodiversity. Dragonflies now join the wide variety of butterflies and moths which frequent this area.

Many natural species live or visit here. Extensive lengths of mixed hedgerow typically include downland hawthorn and blackthorn to feed and provide nesting places for birds and mammals. A variety of grasses provide a place for butterflies to lay eggs, later becoming a food source for caterpillars. Meadow flowers such as ladies bedstraw, red and white clover, knapweed and field scabious produce nectar to benefit insects.

Ant-hills attract woodpeckers to the region, which also feed on beetles living in fallen trees. In the wood, there are many types of fungi to be found. Glades of introduced English bluebells have been created under hawthorn. Larger beech and ash are found towards Patcham Place.

