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# Natural Environment

Green Belt, three rivers, flood risk and wildlife

**Two things dominate the natural environment evidence: almost all open land is Green Belt, and the parish sits where three rivers meet on a low floodplain.**

1

**95%**

**of 1,289 hectares in the Metropolitan Green Belt**

## Almost the whole parish is Green Belt

Only about 65 hectares (5%) lies inside the built-up boundaries of East Peckham and Hale Street. Essentially all land outside the village core is Green Belt.

2

**3**

**main rivers: Medway, Bourne and Coult Stream**

## Three rivers meet here

The Coult Stream runs through the village centre and is classed as a main river. The Boroughs Oak Stream also floods Hale Street. The flat fields at the confluence store flood water and protect Yalding downstream.

3

**57%**

**of parish land in Flood Zone 3**

## Over half the land is in Flood Zone 3

Flood Zone 3 is land the Environment Agency maps as having a 1 in 100 or greater chance of river flooding in any year. 99.9% of land parcels touch Flood Zone 2 or 3. National policy's Sequential Test steers new building to the lowest-risk land first, so the pool of land that could pass it here is small.

4

**1 in 6**

**homes at medium or high risk of river flooding (244 of 1,400)**

## The highest share of homes at flood risk in the borough

On the Environment Agency's 2025 map, East Peckham has the highest proportion of homes at medium or high risk of any parish in Tonbridge and Malling, and the fourth highest number, after Tonbridge, Aylesford and East Malling and Larkfield.

5

**0**

**flood barrier schemes protecting the village**

## Floods in 2000, 2013-14 and 2019-20, and no barrier

The Leigh reservoir protects Tonbridge and Hildenborough, not East Peckham. The only local defence is the Coult flood storage area (about 90,000 cubic metres). The Environment Agency has fitted flood resilience measures to 119 homes.

Read the full topic paper on the Parish Council website: **eastpeckham-pc.gov.uk**, Neighbourhood Plan pages. Ask a committee member today.

**Our Village · Our Voice · Our Plan**

Figures are from the topic paper unless stated. Nothing has been decided. Residents have the final say in a referendum.

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6

**+10-20%**
peak winter rainfall by 2040 (UKCP18)

## Climate change will make flooding worse

Projections give a 20 to 30% rise by 2080. The Environment Agency's new map of future flood extent assumes there are no flood defences, which for an undefended village is close to what would actually happen here. The Parish Council declared a Climate and Wildlife Emergency in February 2021.

7

**46.6 ha**
ancient woodland (3.6% of the parish)

## Ancient woodland is small but irreplaceable

Peckham Fields Wood (26.5 ha), Killing Grove Wood, Alder Shaw, Courtlodge Wood, Hazel Wood and Hale Park Wood. National policy treats ancient woodland as irreplaceable: development affecting it needs wholly exceptional reasons.

8

**190**
protected or priority species records within 1 km

## An unusually rich wildlife record

Nightingale, Turtle Dove, Water Vole, Otter, Kingfisher and ten bat species are recorded, with 139 bird species within 5 km. Local Wildlife Sites include Hale Street Ponds, East Peckham Ponds and the Medway copses and ditches.

9

**4.85 ha**
Henham Woods / The Scrub, by the Coult Stream

## Henham Woods meets the Local Wildlife Site test

Kent Wildlife Trust assessed the site in December 2025 and recommended it as a "candidate Local Wildlife Site": young woodland, scrub, floodplain meadow and the wooded, marshy banks of the Coult Stream.

10

**Grade 2**
best and most versatile agricultural land

## Good farmland, high water table, poor drainage

Soakaway drainage failed at the Church Lane application (refused 2024) because groundwater is too high. New development would need to prove it does not add to flows in the Coult Stream or the Bourne, and the topic paper argues for a 20% biodiversity net gain.

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