

## **LHECZ 11 – Land around Armitage and Handsacre**

### **Summary**

The landscape around the villages of Armitage and Handsacre has changed significantly in the last century resulting in the two villages as well as some smaller outlying settlements being subsumed into a single, large settlement.

The Trent and Mersey canal bounds the HECZ to the north and has provided a logical boundary to the settlements growth. The Western Mainline train line which originally ran between Armitage and Handsacre now cuts through the centre of the settlement.

Where evidence of the settlements past survives in the landscape this is significant, as much of the outlying farmland has been transformed through changes in agricultural practices.

Medium or large scale development is likely to have some impact upon the historic environment assets of the zone. Any development which may be planned for the zone would need to address impacts upon and potential mitigation strategies for:

- the Conservation Area and Listed Buildings
- the potential for below ground archaeological deposits
- the impact upon the surviving historic landscape character to the west of Hood Lane and how this could be retained or reflected in any design.
- Impact on the canal and its setting

Early consultation with the Conservation Officers at Lichfield District Council, the Cultural Heritage Team at Staffordshire County Council and English Heritage is advised.

### **Designations (map 1)**

There are 14 Listed Buildings within the LHECZ.

There is one conservation area covering the Trent and Mersey Canal and some areas immediately surrounding it.

There is one Scheduled Monument on the moated site of Handsacre Hall.

There are no other designated sites falling within this LHECZ.

### **Archaeological Character (map 2)**

The landscape of this HECZ would have been dominated by woodland until the Bronze Age and there is evidence within the wider landscape of a small scale pastoral economy from this period. The Trent Valley to the east of the county is an area of intensive human activity from the prehistoric period onwards and it is likely that the river valleys within this zone also attracted human activity and even occupation in the wider area. The area also falls within the hinterland of the Castle Ring hill fort dating to the Iron Age so there is potential for finds or remains from this period.

To the north of the Trent and Mersey Canal and beyond the HECZ a range of significant prehistoric cropmarks are recorded including a Neolithic Interrupted Ditch System (formerly known as a Causewayed Enclosure), Bronze Age ring ditches and Iron Age/Romano-British pit alignments. The remains support the argument for extensive clearance, occupation and monument construction within the river valleys during the later prehistoric period. While no such remains are currently recorded within the HECZ there remains the potential for similar significant late prehistoric remains to be present.

The Scheduled medieval moated site of Handsacre Hall (PRN 00220) now sits within an urban context although originally this status site would have been located within a rural situation on the outskirts Armitage and Handsacre. A single fishpond to the south of the moated site served the residence and further associated features are likely to survive as below ground features.

The two settlements are distinct and clearly separate when depicted upon the Ordnance Survey First Edition mapping for the area. It is during the 20<sup>th</sup> century that the two settlements become joined as the expansion of dormitory estates extended away from the historic cores of the two villages.

Clarkes Hay farmstead has been swallowed up by later settlement expansion while Cruck Cottage Farm has remained distinct from later expansions. The Trent and Mersey Canal (PRN 05231) forms the northern limit of the HECZ.

### **Historic Landscape (map 3)**

The landscape around the villages of Armitage and Handsacre has changed significantly in the last century resulting in the two villages as well as some smaller outlying settlements being subsumed into a single, large settlement and have lost their individual identities.

Many of the enclosed fields have lost their boundaries however, to the east of Hood Lane the historic field pattern survives as piecemeal enclosure. This field pattern was probably created in the post medieval period, although in some parts of the country it dates from the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Its presence indicates that by the medieval period this area was being farmed as scattered strips across two or more arable open fields. It was a communal method of farming and was probably closely associated with the settlement of Armitage to the north. The process of piecemeal enclosure was carried out by means of informal, verbal agreements between farmers who wished to consolidate their individual strips into holdings. There are a number of 17<sup>th</sup>C isolated farmhouses in this area which illustrate the early agricultural use of the land. The moated site of Handsacre Hall, itself scheduled, is now surrounded by residential housing and as such as lost some of its context.

The southern area in part still has evidence of this early landscape but there are areas of post 1880's reorganised fields where it has been eroded.

The Trent and Mersey canal bounds the HECZ to the north and has provided a logical boundary to the settlements growth. The Western Mainline train line which originally ran between Armitage and Handsacre now cuts through the centre of the settlement.

Where evidence of the settlements past survives in the landscape this is significant, as much of the outlying farmland has been transformed through changes in agricultural practices. The further coagulation of the dispersed farmsteads into the overall village should be avoided.

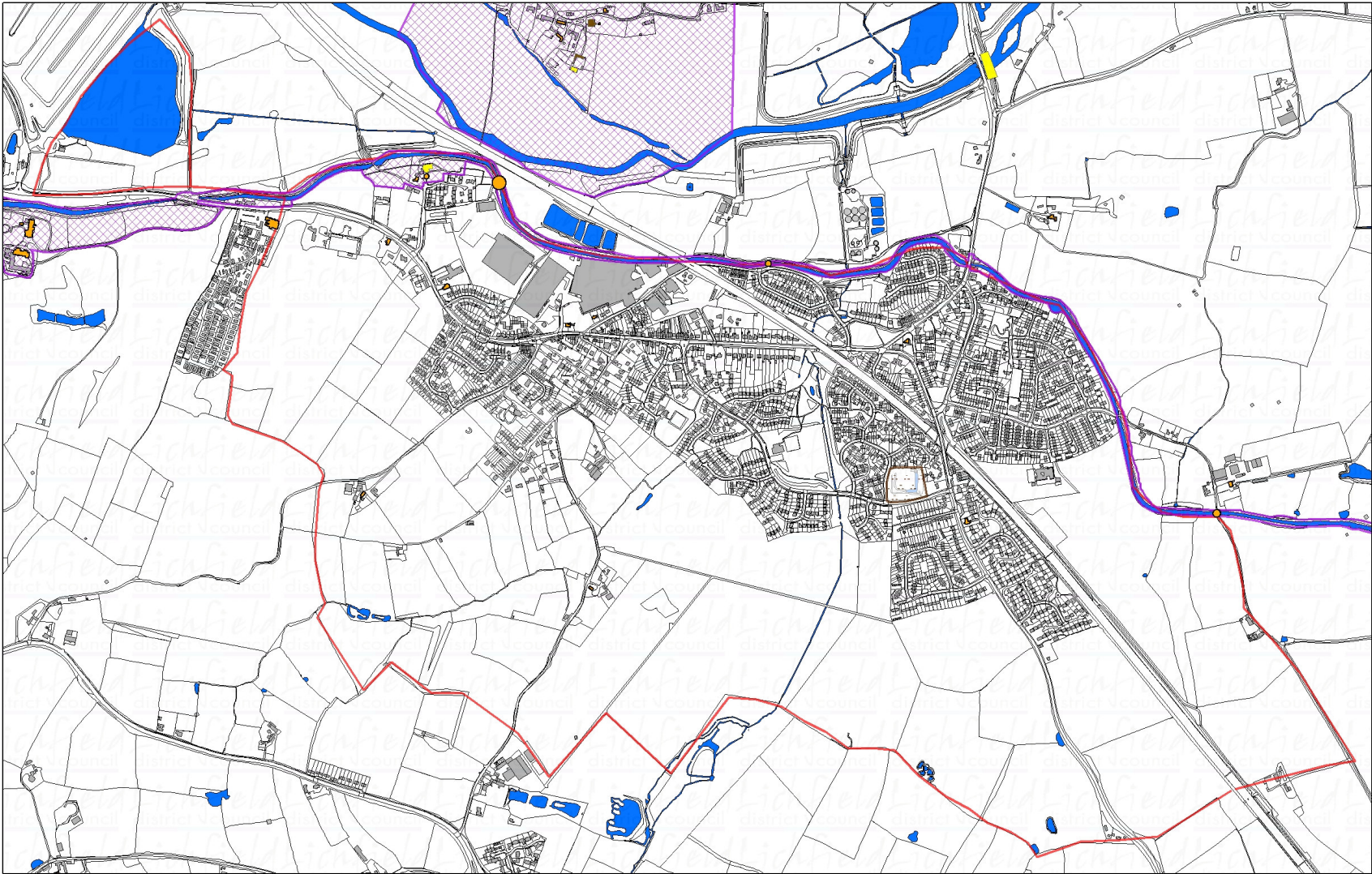
### Historic Assets Summary Table

Survival	The historic settlements and surrounding landscape has been significantly developed this century.	2
Potential	Given the level of development it is likely that most remains have been compromised.	1
Documentation	Comprises the HER data and the VCH volume as well as local histories.	2
Diversity	There are very few known assets. Known assets are similar in character relating to the landscape and historic farmsteads.	2
Group Association	Contains a limited range of assets although some relate well in date.	2
Amenity Value	There are some aspects of the historic environment which contribute to the sense of place and would lend themselves to be promoted as such.	2
Sensitivity	There is the potential for the historic environment to be impacted by large to medium scale development including the dispersed nature of the current settlement pattern.	2
<b>Overall Score</b>		<b>13</b>

For further information regarding the Historic Environment Record (HER); Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) and designated sites please contact:

Cultural Heritage Team  
 Environment & Countryside  
 Development Services Directorate  
 Staffordshire County Council  
 Riverway  
 Stafford  
 ST16 3TJ  
 Tel: 01785 277281/277285/277290  
 Email: [her@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:her@staffordshire.gov.uk)

Conservation and Urban Design Team  
 Democratic, Development and Legal  
 Services  
 Lichfield District Council  
 Frog Lane  
 Lichfield  
 WS13 6YU  
 Tel: 01543 308203/ 308188  
 Email:  
[design.conservation@lichfielddc.gov.uk](mailto:design.conservation@lichfielddc.gov.uk)

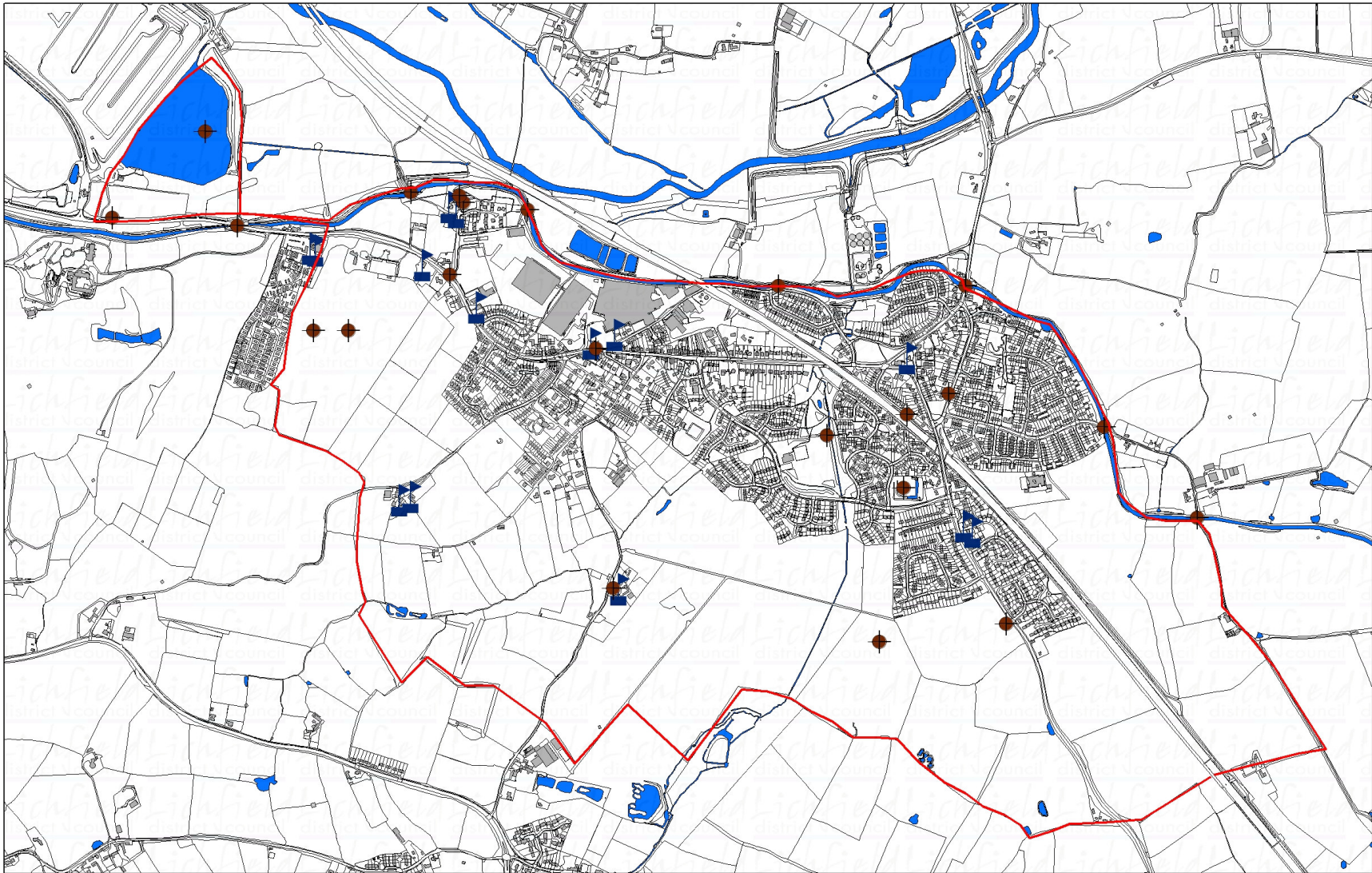


**Map 1: LHECZ 11:  
 Armitage -  
 Designated Historic  
 Environment Assets**

Scale: Not to Scale  
 Date: April 2009  
 Drawn By: Debbie Boffin  
 Drawing No:  
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**Key**

Grade 1	Conservation Areas
Grade 2	Ancient Monuments
Grade 2*	HECA boundaries



**Lichfield**  
 District Council  
 DISTRICT COUNCIL HOUSE  
 100A STAMFORD  
 STAMFORD  
 LEICESTERSHIRE LE19 1BA  
 TEL: 01509 2344 2333  
 WWW.LICHFIELD.COUNCIL.NET

**Map 2: LHECZ 11:  
 Armitage -  
 HER data  
 (excluding findspots and  
 documentary evidence)**

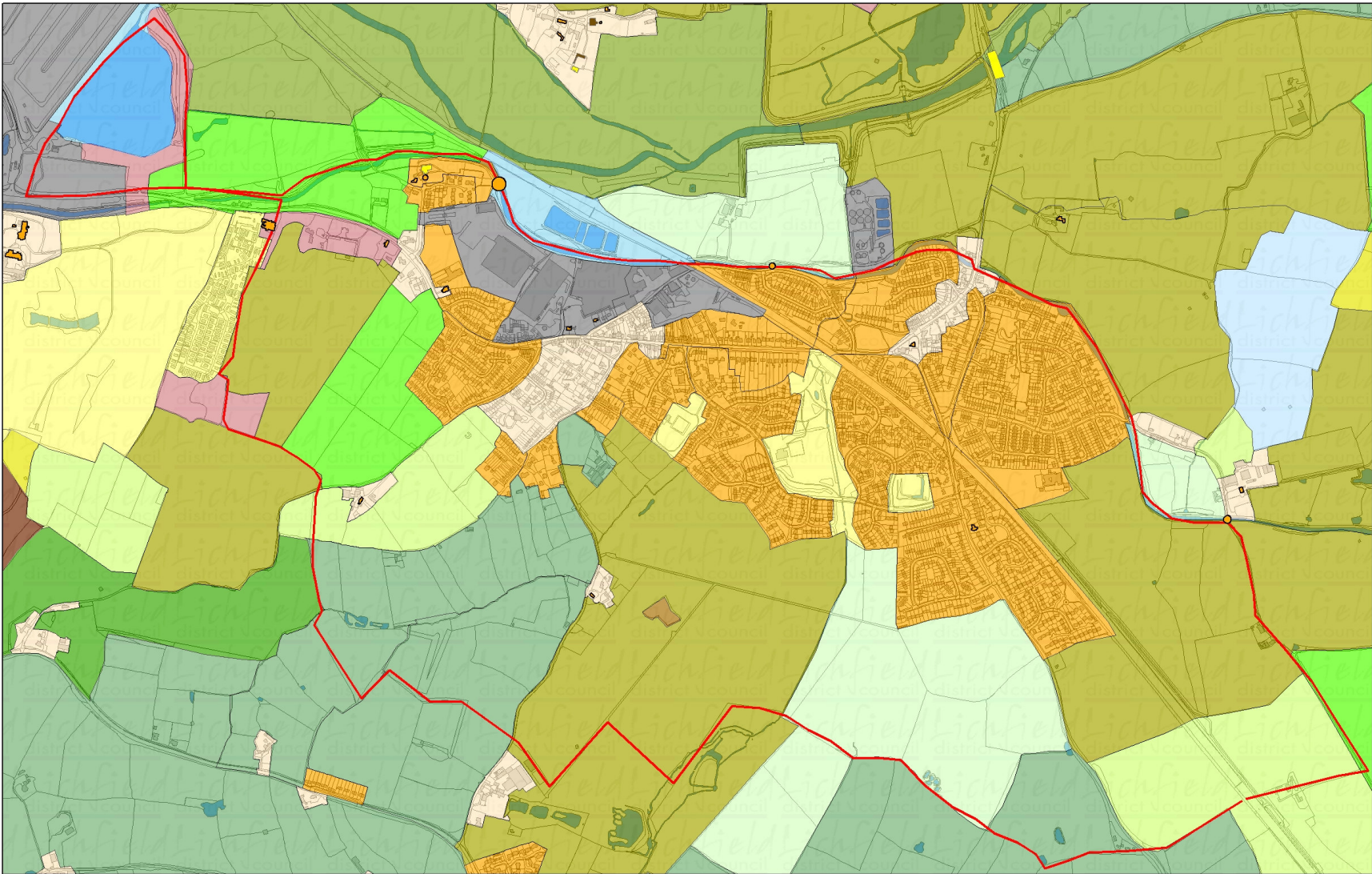
Scale: Not to Scale	Date: February 2009
Drawn By: Debbie Boffin	
Drawing No:	

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**Key**

- Building
- Monument



**Map 3: LHECZ 11:  
Armitage -  
Refined HLC**

Scale: Not to Scale  
Date: April 2009  
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- HECA boundaries
- Miscellaneous Floodplain Fields
- 18th/19th century planned field systems
- 18th/19th century semi planned field systems
- Ancient Woodland
- Other early woodlands
- Post 1880s Settlement
- Pre 1880s Settlement
- Piecemeal Enclosure
- Early Unenclosed Land
- Early Irregular Enclosure
- Early small rectilinear fields
- Historic parks and gardens
- Other parkland
- Post 1880s Re-organised fields
- Post 1880s on all replanned field systems
- Pre 1880s paddocks & doses
- Industrial & Extractive
- Artificial water bodies
- Communications
- Early Assaults
- Military
- Other Recent Woodlands
- Plantations
- Pre 1880s drained wetlands
- Re-organised piecemeal enclosure
- Recent or re-established unenclosed land
- Recent replanted ancient woodland