

# Landscapes of Worcestershire

## Landscape Type Advice Sheet - *Land Management*

# Principal Timbered Farmlands

### Landscape Type Description

A small scale wooded, agricultural landscape characterised by filtered views through densely scattered hedgerow trees. This is a complex, in places intimate, landscape of irregularly shaped woodlands, winding lanes and frequent wayside dwellings. Its mosaic of agricultural land was cleared directly from woodland, on a piecemeal basis, and from former localised areas of open fields, resulting in a lack of strong settlement nuclei



### Key Characteristics

#### Primary

- Hedgerow boundaries to fields
- Ancient wooded character
- Notable pattern of hedgerow trees, predominantly oak

#### Secondary

- Organic enclosure pattern
- Small-scale landscape, hedgerow trees creating filtered views
- Brick and timber building style of old properties
- Rolling lowland with occasional steep-sided hills and low escarpments

#### Tertiary

- Mixed farming land use
- Dispersed settlement pattern



### Current Concerns

The basic concern for the retention of the character of this landscape is the loss of scale and structure due to the decline and fragmentation of the elements of tree cover, most notably of hedgerow trees. The majority of hedgerow oaks are classed as mature or veteran, with little evidence of new stock being planted or natural regeneration being encouraged. The distribution of woodlands is generally uneven and the streamside cover is also fragmented in places. Though traditionally a landscape of mixed farming, a gradual increase in arable land uses is evident locally, which can be associated with loss of function of hedgerow structure. Once this happens, the tree cover structure becomes fragmented, the scope for hedgerow trees become restricted and the sense of scale and enclosure is lost.

## Landscape Type Advice Sheet - *Land Management*

# Principal Timbered Farmlands

### Guidelines for Land Management

#### How to use this sheet

The aim of this information sheet is to provide *general guidelines* about the priorities for land management activities - focusing on relevant landscape features - within this Landscape Type. However, Landscape Types are generic descriptions of landscape character and any advice **must** be interpreted within the context of the site in question. Please also visit the Landscapes of Worcestershire mapping pages <http://gis.worcestershire.gov.uk/home/wcc-lca-maps> to click on your area and read the more specific ecological and landscape descriptions.

In the case of any habitat work, specialist advice should be sought from the County Ecologists and/or the appropriate agency (Natural England, Forestry Commission, Environment Agency, Defra) to ensure that the work is appropriate, is carried out at the right time of year, in the correct manner and in the best possible location. Surveys may need to be carried out to assess the sites for presence of protected species or existing habitat. With this in mind, please read on for opportunities for land/habitat management activities appropriate to this Landscape Type...

#### Woodland and Trees

The general guidelines for woodland in Principal Timbered Farmlands are to:

- **conserve** the ancient hedgerow oak population, and **enhance** the age structure where possible through new planting
- **conserve** all ancient woodland sites and restock with locally occurring native species
- **restore** the tree cover pattern through promoting the coalescence of fragmented relic ancient woodland
- encourage the **creation** of new woodlands, reflecting the scale, shape and composition of the existing ancient woodland character - oak should be favoured as the major species
- **conserve** and **restore** tree cover along water courses and streamlines
- seek opportunities to **enhance** tree cover along highways and other non-farmed locations

Whilst it is recognised from an ecological perspective, that 'new' ancient woodland can't simply be created, new woodland can - from the landscape perspective - reflect ancient characteristics in terms of shape/outline and species composition and so integrate into the landscape and strengthen its character. There may also be opportunities to restore areas of ancient woodland through the introduction of appropriate management, or the removal of alien species and appropriate re-planting.

#### Hedgerows

The general guideline for hedgerows in Principal Timbered Farmlands is to:

- **conserve** and **restore** the pattern and composition of the hedgerow structure through appropriate management, and replanting

There may be opportunities to plant new hedgerows, restore, strengthen or protect existing hedgerows and their patterns, and promote appropriate management - in terms of maintenance regimes and protection from stock. The species composition of existing long established hedgerows should be used to guide the composition of new hedgerow planting. There may also be opportunities to plant new hedgerow trees, extend the life of existing hedgerow trees through such means as tree surgery, protective measures, or protection of the setting (i.e. the hedgerow). The planting of new generations of hedgerow and field oak trees would be particularly beneficial. The use of protective designations such as TPOs might be relevant. The removal of inappropriate trees - such as belts of poplar may on occasion be appropriate, combined with new planting of a more appropriate feature in terms of species and location.

For more information visit our website [www.worcestershire.gov.uk/lca](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/lca) or contact the Worcestershire County Council Environmental Policy Team on 01905 766038