

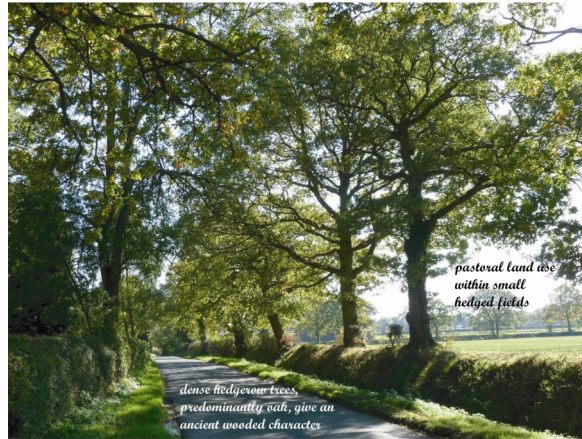
# Landscapes of Worcestershire

## Landscape Type Advice Sheet - *Land Management*

# Timbered Pastures

### Landscape Type Description

A small-scale, settled, pastoral landscape characterised by filtered views through densely scattered hedgerow trees. The oak trees convey a sense of scale and stature combined with a feeling of maturity and history. This is a complex landscape of relic commons and former wood pasture, reflected today by an intermixed pattern of irregular fields and scattered farms occurring next to areas of geometric enclosure, straight roads and strings of wayside dwellings.



### Key Characteristics

#### Primary

- Notable tree cover pattern of mature hedgerow oaks
- Ancient wooded character
- Small-scale landscape with well-defined pattern of small, hedged fields

#### Secondary

- Pastoral land use
- Dense network of minor lanes

#### Tertiary

- Impoverished, poorly draining soils with wet heathy vegetation
- Variable enclosure pattern
- Dispersed settlement pattern of farmsteads and strings of wayside dwellings



### Current Concerns

The key feature, providing the character and structure of this landscape, is the dominant presence of dense lines of mature hedgerow oaks. However, the age structure of these trees is unbalanced, with the majority being mature or veteran. Changes in land use are evident, with a change to arable farming and also an increase in the grazing of horses becoming evident, both of which can have a detrimental effect upon the hedgerow structure, and in turn on the perpetuation of hedgerow trees. Also, significant numbers of field ponds are being lost due to infilling.

This landscape is also subject to many pressures due to proximity of the conurbation of Birmingham, not least through the modification of the characteristic wayside dwellings as a result of modernisation and enlargement. Pressures to modify the narrow winding complex of lanes could become a priority as traffic volumes increase.

Emphasis needs to be placed upon promoting the importance of hedgerow oaks to this landscape and the conservation of the hedgerow pattern is fundamental in order to facilitate the structure for such trees. Opportunities to conserve and restore permanent pasture would strengthen the unity of this landscape.

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### 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...

The general guidelines for woodland and trees in Timbered Pastures are to:

#### Woodland and Trees

- **conserve** the dominant presence and density of hedgerow oak trees
- seek opportunities to **enhance** tree cover along highways and other non-farmed locations

Hedgerow oaks are a dominant feature of these landscapes, but the age structure of these trees is in poor condition, with many of the trees being mature or over-mature. Opportunities should be sought to plant new hedgerow trees as well as extending the life of existing hedgerow trees through such means as tree surgery, protective measures, (including designations such as TPOs). There may also be opportunities to create small areas of new woodland. However, large woodlands are not characteristic of these landscapes. Whilst it is recognised from an ecological perspective, that ancient woodland itself cannot simply be created, from the landscape perspective, new woodland can reflect ancient characteristics in terms of shape/outline and species composition and so integrate into the landscape and strengthen its character. By way of contrast, woodland exhibiting different characteristics – such as a straight/regular outline and single species composition would dilute the ancient character.

The general guideline for hedgerows in Timbered Pastures is to:

#### Hedgerows

- **conserve** and **restore** the small scale pattern of hedged fields, through appropriate management

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 primary (long established) hedgerows should be noted and used to guide the composition of new hedgerow planting. Fencing and other uncharacteristic boundary treatments could be removed and replaced by hedgerows.

#### Commonland, Grassland and Ponds

The general guidelines for commonland, pasture and ponds in Timbered Pastures are to:

- seek opportunities to reintroduce the character of unenclosed commons through creative design
- **conserve** and **restore** areas of permanent pasture/pastoral land use character
- **maintain** the distinctive density of ponds

This landscape is characterised by the presence of areas of unimproved permanent pasture, together with high densities of small field ponds associated with former marl pits. The decline in the dominance of permanent pasture dilutes the unity of this landscape and opportunities to **conserve** but also to **restore** this land use should be sought. This is a landscape which also formerly included a distinctive concentration of unenclosed commons, the essential character of which could be re-introduced through creative design or opportunities associated with development.

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

