

LCT6 Enclosed Chalk and Clay Woodland

Historical Influences

The Enclosed Chalk and Clay Woodland demonstrates a cross section of an historic environment captured in a state of change. This landscape contains varying degrees of later post-medieval parliamentary field systems and a series of larger and more modern prairie fields which represent the introduction of an increasingly mechanized state of farming during the 20th and into the 21st centuries. The later and clearly surveyed parliamentary field systems and their subsequent but more sporadic opening up into larger prairie fields removed what appear to have been extensive elements of large assarted fields. These assarted fields occur on the upland slopes of this landscape character type and, given the size and shape of their boundaries most probably represent eighteenth and early nineteenth century assarting of upland woodland.

Extensive elements of woodland displaying both pre and post-1810 elements survive particularly upon the upland areas of Enclosed Chalk and Clay Woodland.

Settlement Pattern

Substantial and formal settlements are missing from Enclosed Chalk and Clay Woodlands. Where assarted field systems or woodland survive to any extent there remains a scattered number of farmsteads dotted around the landscape in relative proximity to each other. Where parliamentary field systems and later prairie fields have any replaced evidence of assarting, the farmsteads are more widely spaced.

Communication Network

Narrow, winding roads extend throughout this Landscape Character Type and appear to retain their medieval or early post-medieval character. These routes generally move between the higher forested and assarted upland areas down towards the lowland areas.

Key Natural and Cultural Landscape Issues

- Erosion arising from access to viewpoints on, or close to, fragile areas of grassland
- Maintenance of public rights of way
- Appropriate management of woodland
- Maintenance of Parkland
- Maintenance of the intimate winding rural lanes with a good sense of tranquillity and remoteness
- Impact of traffic on the tranquil and remote character
- Loss of chalk downland to arable or scrub encroachment
- Lack of coppice management leading to a reduction of specialised species such as butterflies
- Isolation of small patches of habitat
- Hedgerow fragmentation and loss
- Declining farmland bird populations
- Loss of unimproved mesotrophic grassland to arable or through application of fertilisers
- Management of local woodlands for commercial game shooting.