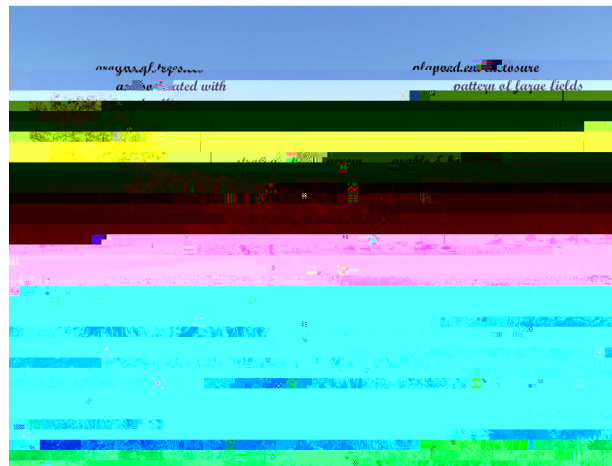


Landscapes of Worcestershire

Landscape Type Advice Sheet - *Land Management*

Principal Village Farmlands



These are landscapes derived from vast expanses of former open field, which have remained under intensive cultivation following their enclosure and in which the regeneration of woodland and tree cover has never re-established to any significant degree, with the exception of elm, which was formerly a dominant hedgerow tree. The key elements of these open landscapes are the settlement pattern and land use, with a notable contrast between the concentrations of dwellings and farmsteads in the villages and the relatively unsettled land between them.

Opportunities to improve the structure and wildlife potential of the landscape should be concentrated on restoring good linear tree cover along the watercourses and streams, encouraging new tree planting in and around the settlement nuclei to enhance village settings, promoting the development of wide field margins, and appropriately managing roadside verges and other non-productive land. Traditional orchards are also a notable characteristic but are gradually disappearing in certain areas, being replaced by bush cover and associated with this is the loss of old fruit tree varieties, many with close links to the County. Woodland cover is not a characteristic of the village farmlands and the prospect of new woodland planting in these areas would dilute their distinctive character.

The general guidelines for trees and orchards in Principal Village Farmlands are to:

- conserve and enhance tree cover along watercourses and hedges
- encourage opportunities for tree planting in and around villages
- conserve and restore old orchards around villages, with emphasis placed upon the locally distinctive fruit type and varieties
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The general guideline for hedgerows in Principal Village Farmlands is to:

- conserve and enhance hedgerow structure, with emphasis on the primary hedgelines

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.

Field Margins and Verges

The general guidelines for field margins and verges in Principal Village Farmlands are to:

- promote the development of wide field margins
- promote management of roadside verges for wildlife benefit

These are intensively cultivated landscapes so opportunities for widespread habitat restoration or creation are limited. However, significant benefits for biodiversity may be achieved by enhancing existing sites – developing wide field margins and managing roadside verges for wildlife benefit (i.e. employing appropriate mowing regimes).