

West Walk

Location

West Walk totals some 359 hectares in area lying approximately 1.5 miles to the north-east of Wickham in southern Hampshire.

Tenure

The Forestry Commission owns the freehold of West Walk.

Landscape

Being nearly 360 hectares, West Walk is significant in the local landscape, being surrounded by agricultural land and scattered, smaller woodlands as well as small villages. The woodland sits entirely within the South Downs National Park.

Current Woodland Structure

The whole of West Walk is ancient woodland. Approximately 25% of the woodland area (~93ha) is classified as ancient semi-natural woodland and around 75% of the woodland area (~269ha) is classified as plantation on an ancient woodland site. Around 55% of the woodland currently consists of native or honourary native broadleaves with Oak accounting for 35% of the total area. There is significant conifer component covering around 35% of the woodland including Corsican Pine, Larch and Western Hemlock.

The age class of canopy trees ranges from 0 to over 100 years old. The diversity of age ranges is fairly good but with a slight bias towards the 41-50 age class accounting for just over 25% of the area.

There is a good proportion of open space, approximately 11% of the woodland in addition to the wide edges to the road and ride network.

Biodiversity and Conservation

Ancient Woodland and associated features are the main points of conservation interest within the woodlands.

The variety of broadleaved and coniferous woodland, added to open space along the ride and road network through the woodland gives rise to suitable habitats for invertebrates and in turn woodland birds. Birds of prey, amphibians, medium mammals and bats have been recorded in recent years. Liverwort is also present, as are a number of Small-Leaved Lime trees and other trees of significant age. The woodland is also home to a considerable bryophyte and lichen community.

During management interventions, opportunities for ride widening and habitat enhancement will be taken to increase the ecotone of the woodland and provide connecting habitats for invertebrates and other associated species such as woodland birds. Decisions about where such enhancement work will take place will be made at the operational stage of management.

West Walk is a prominent site for its Small-Leaved Lime. This historically important species adds to the biodiversity value of the woodland whilst also being noted as a species possibly likely to be better suited to our changing climate. Small-Leaved Lime will be sensitively

Managed, enhanced and maintained during management interventions. The Species Action Plan produced by the Limewood Working Group will be referred to when planning operations.

People

West Wood is dedicated for open access under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000), allowing open public access.

With 3 car parks as well as formal recreational areas, West Walk is highly used by the public for a range of activities including walking, running and cycling. Horse riding is allowed (by permit) within the southern section of the woodland.

Recently installed play equipment suitable for a variety of age groups, as well as a barbeque site, toilet block and seasonal catering facilities make this a major recreational woodland within the local context. It is estimated that around 170,000 people use the car parks each year.

Open junctions, wide rides and clear paths enhance the experience of a walk around

West Walk. During management interventions opportunities to enhance the visual impact of rides and individual trees will also be taken by selecting trees for retention based on character.

Historic Environment

Historical features noted within West Walk are old wood banks and a breached dam below West Lodge. Continued monitoring will take place to ensure that anything relevant found is recorded and fed into operational planning in line with statutory responsibilities and best practice guidelines.

Soils

The soils at West Walk are varied across the site. They include gleys, with some gravel in places and also some free-draining sandy loam areas as well.

Water

There are several drains within West Walk. These connect to streams which eventually flow into either the River Meon or Wallington River.

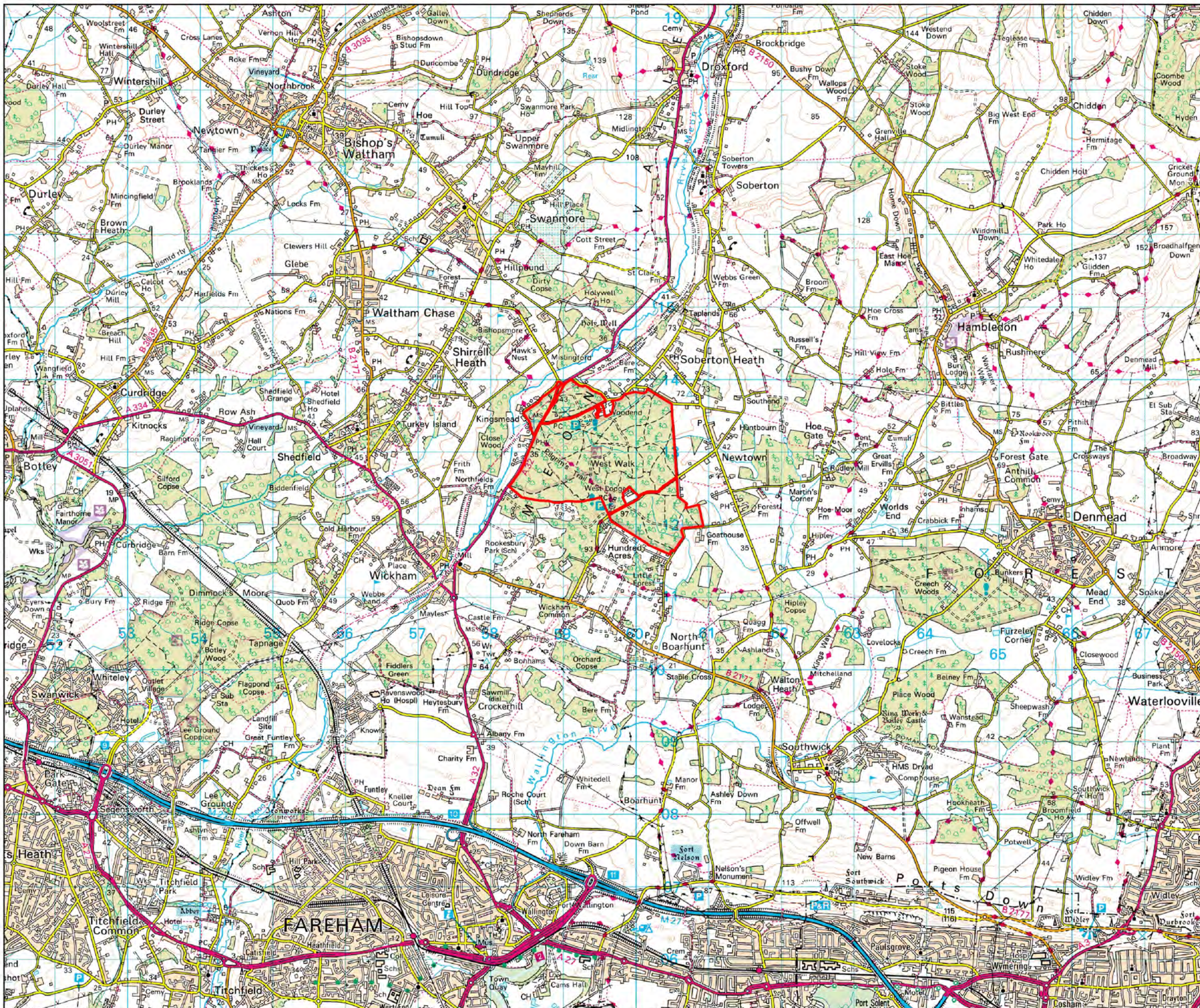
There are also a number of ponds which provide valuable amphibian and reptile habitat as well as invertebrates.

Management practices within the woodland can have an impact on downstream temperatures and water quality.

Tree Diseases and Pests

The main diseases of concern currently are *Chalara Fraxinea* (Ash Dieback), *Dothistroma* (red band) Needle Blight on Corsican Pine, and *Phytophthora ramorum* on Larch. Although Ash and Larch are minimal if present at all within the woodland, Corsican Pine is a significant species. Dothistroma therefore poses some risk of forced structural change.

Sugar-gum is the only non-native plant species recorded within West Walk. Continued monitoring will take place to ensure that this and any other species identified which pose a threat to native flora are managed appropriately do not become established.



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South England Forest District

West Walk

Location

Key



West Walk

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West Walk

Aerial

Key



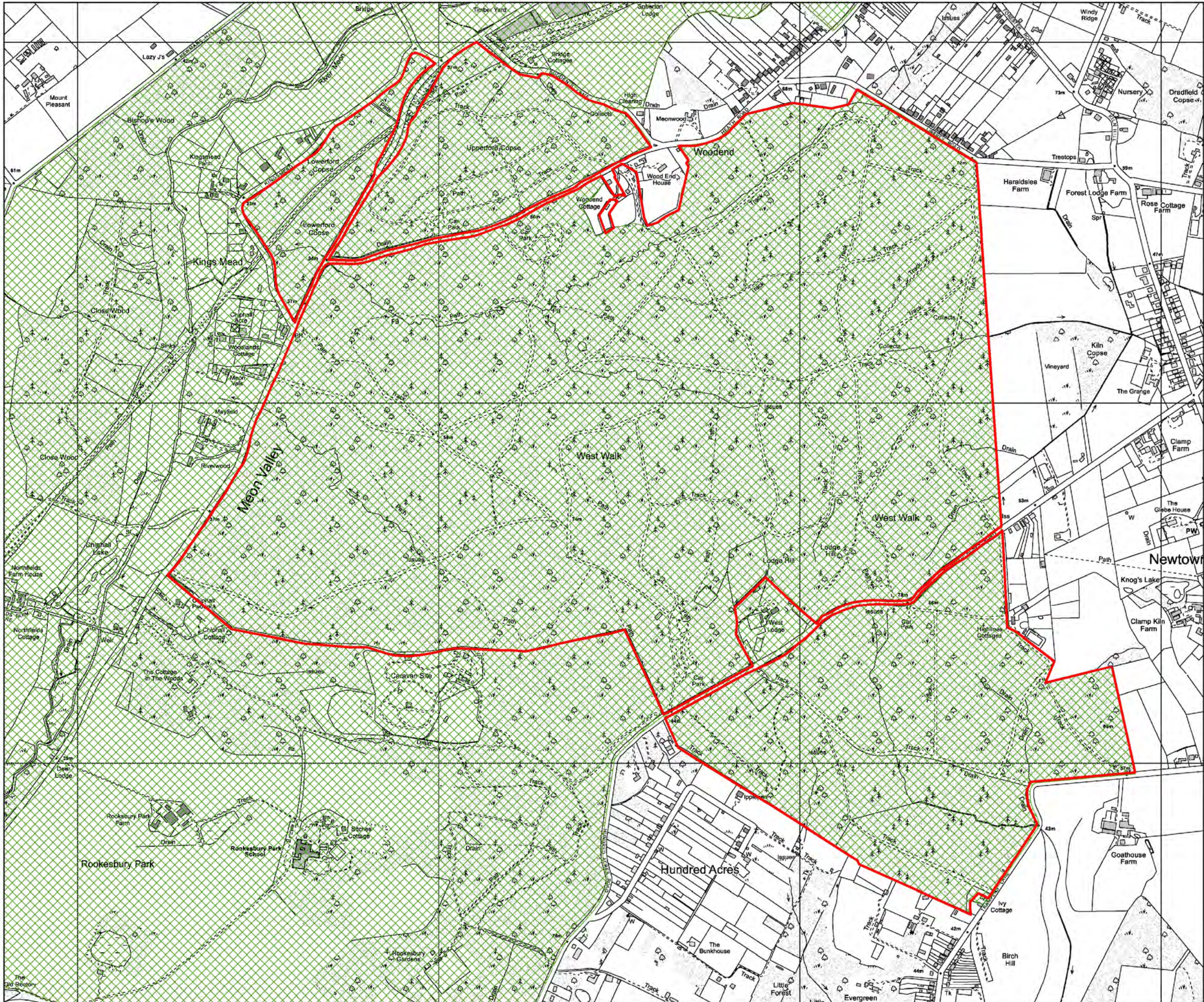
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West Walk

South Downs National Park

Key



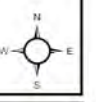
Management Area



South Downs National Park

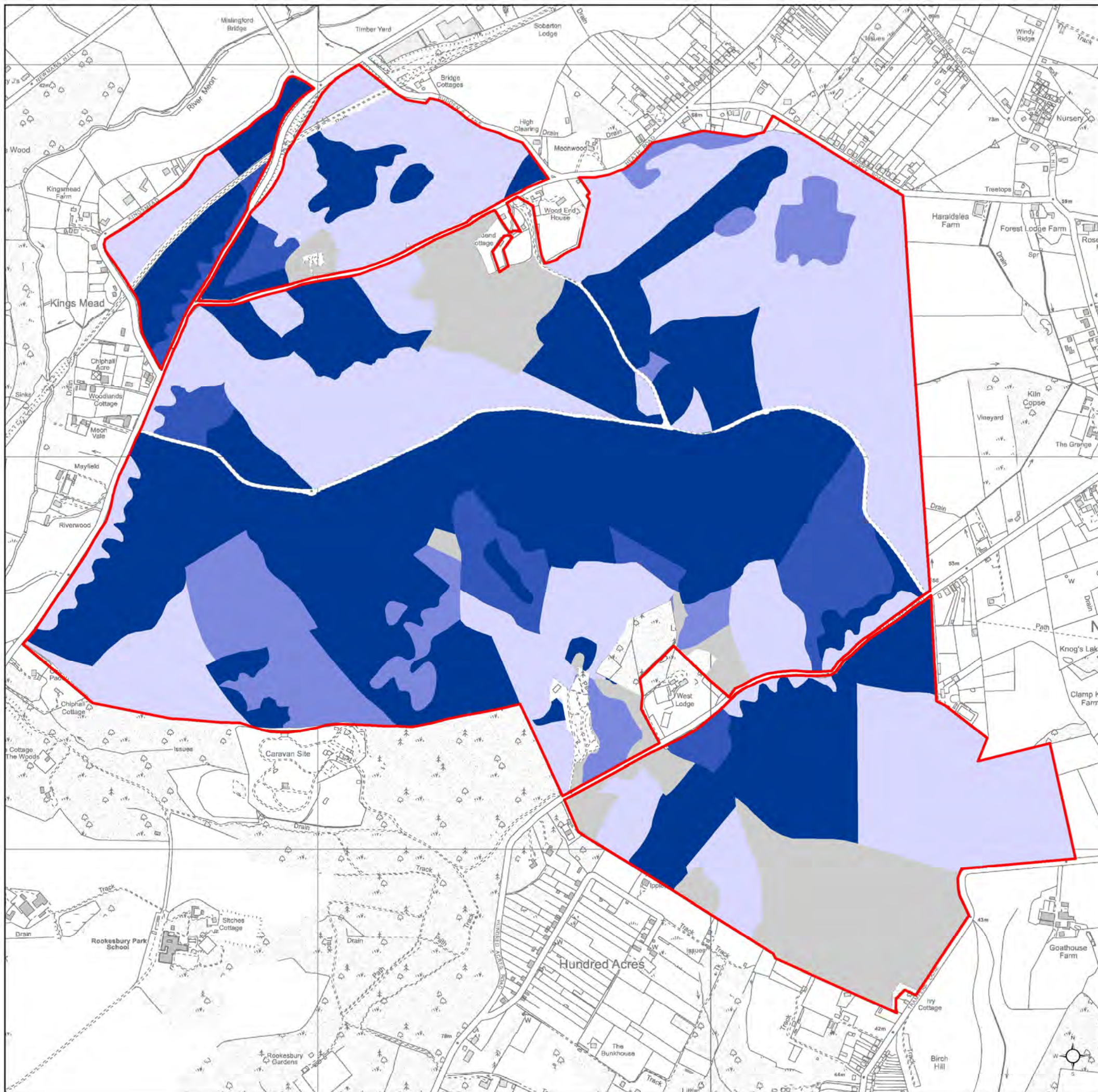
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West Walk

Ancient Woodland Semi-Natural Scoring



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Key

Ancient Woodland Areas

- 1 - Over 80% native
- 2 - Between 50% and 80% native
- 3 - Between 20% and 50% native
- 4 - Less than 20% native
- Currently open or un-established woodland

- Forest of Bere Management Area

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West Walk

Indicative Age Diversity



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- Over 100 Years Old
- 81 - 100 Years Old
- 61 - 80 Years Old
- 41 - 60 Years Old
- 21 - 40 Years Old
- 1 - 20 Years Old
- West Walk Management Area

Gaps illustrate indicative or actual open space
or areas covered by recent natural regeneration

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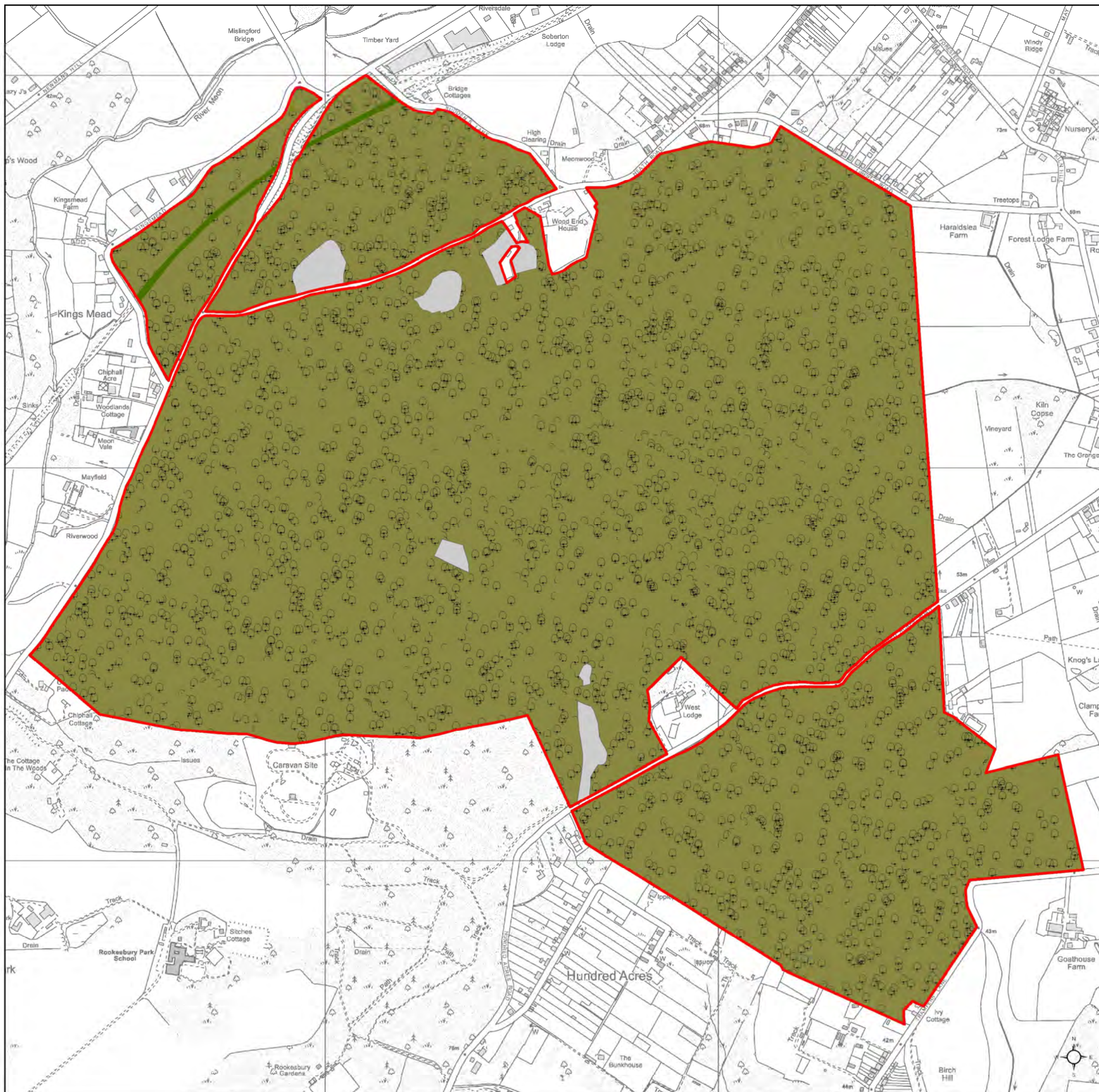
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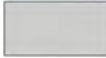



West Walk

Long Term Vision



Key

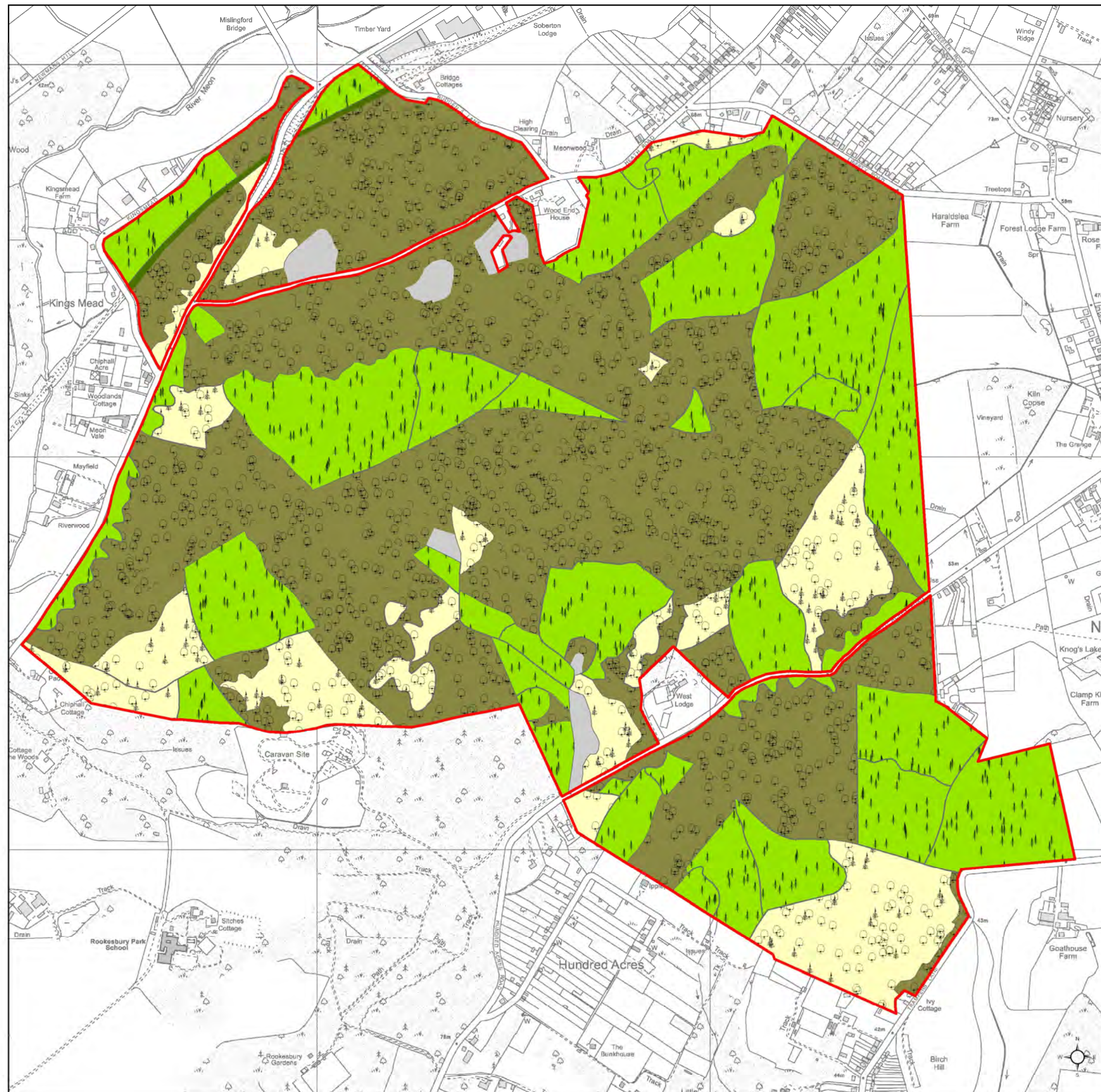
-  Predominantly (>80%) native and honourary-native broadleaved woodland
-  Open Space
-  Car Park/Recreational/Agricultural
-  West Walk Management Area

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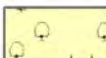






West Walk

Current Structure



Key

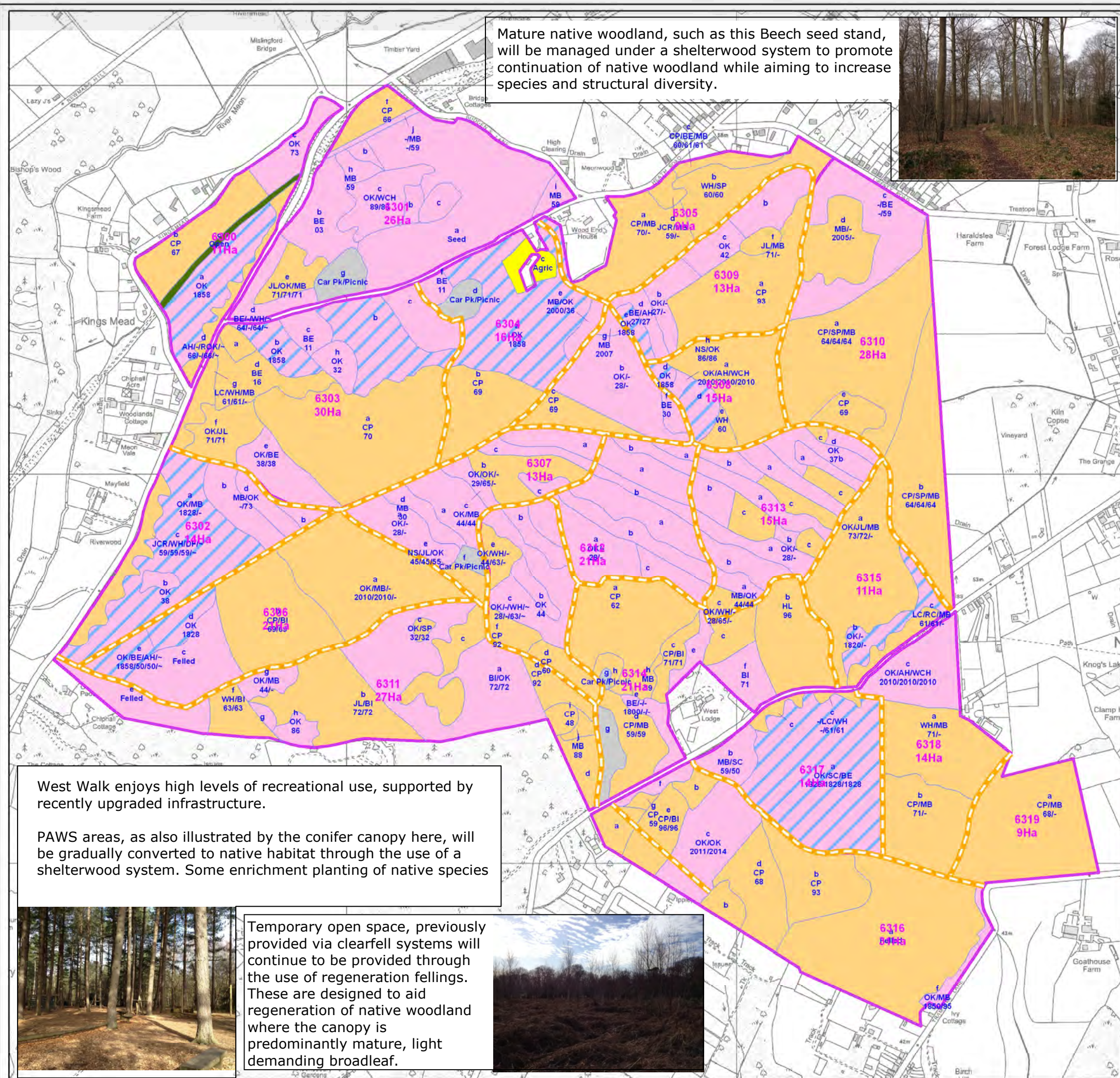
-  Predominantly (>80%) native and honourary-native broadleaved woodland
-  Mixed Woodland.
No species type (broadleaf or conifer) represents more than 80% of the canopy
-  Conifer Woodland.
Predominantly (>80%) conifer species
-  Open Space
-  Car Park/Recreational/Agricultural
-  West Walk Management Area

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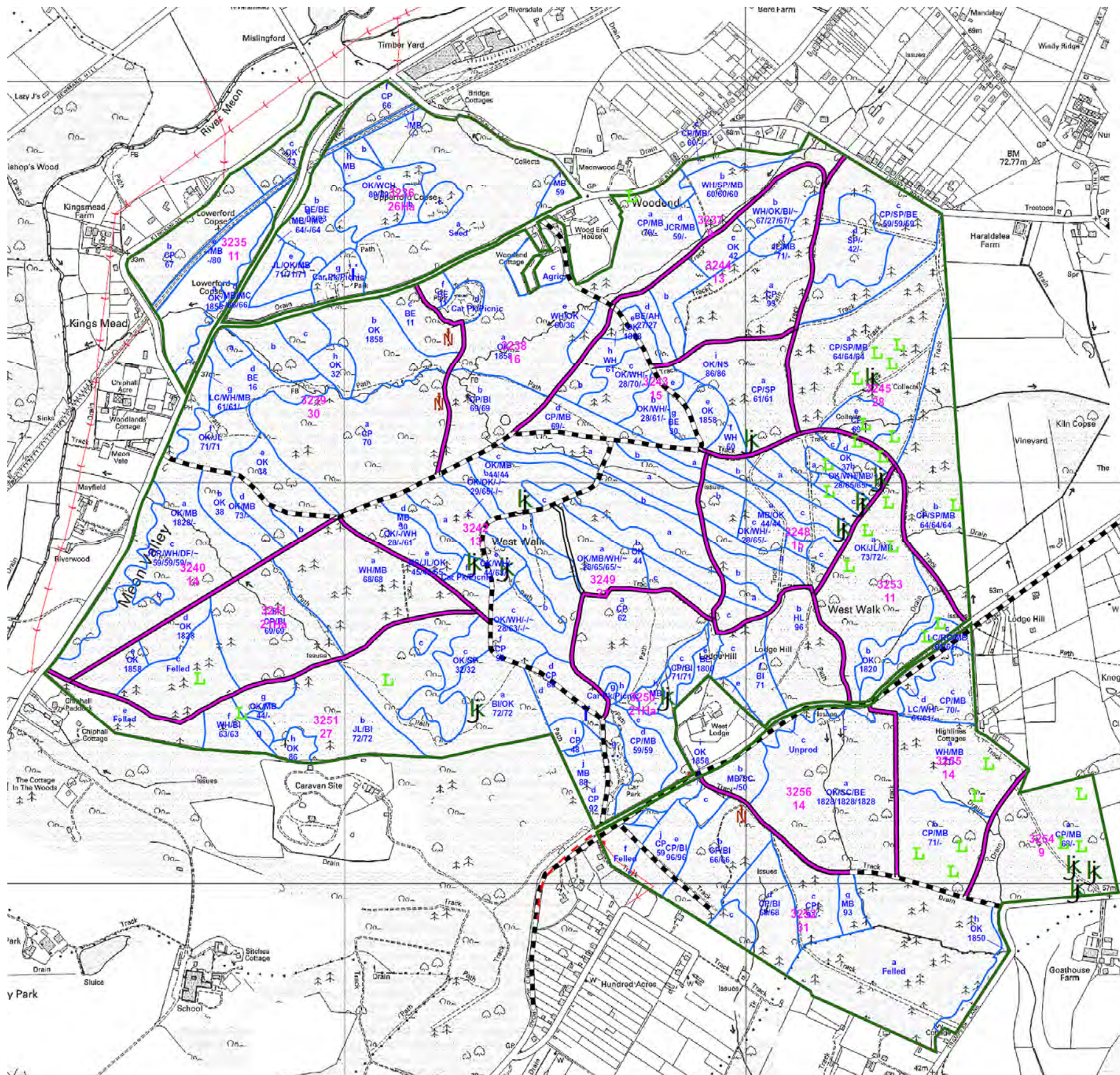
West Walk

Habitat Restoration & Felling

Forestry Commission England

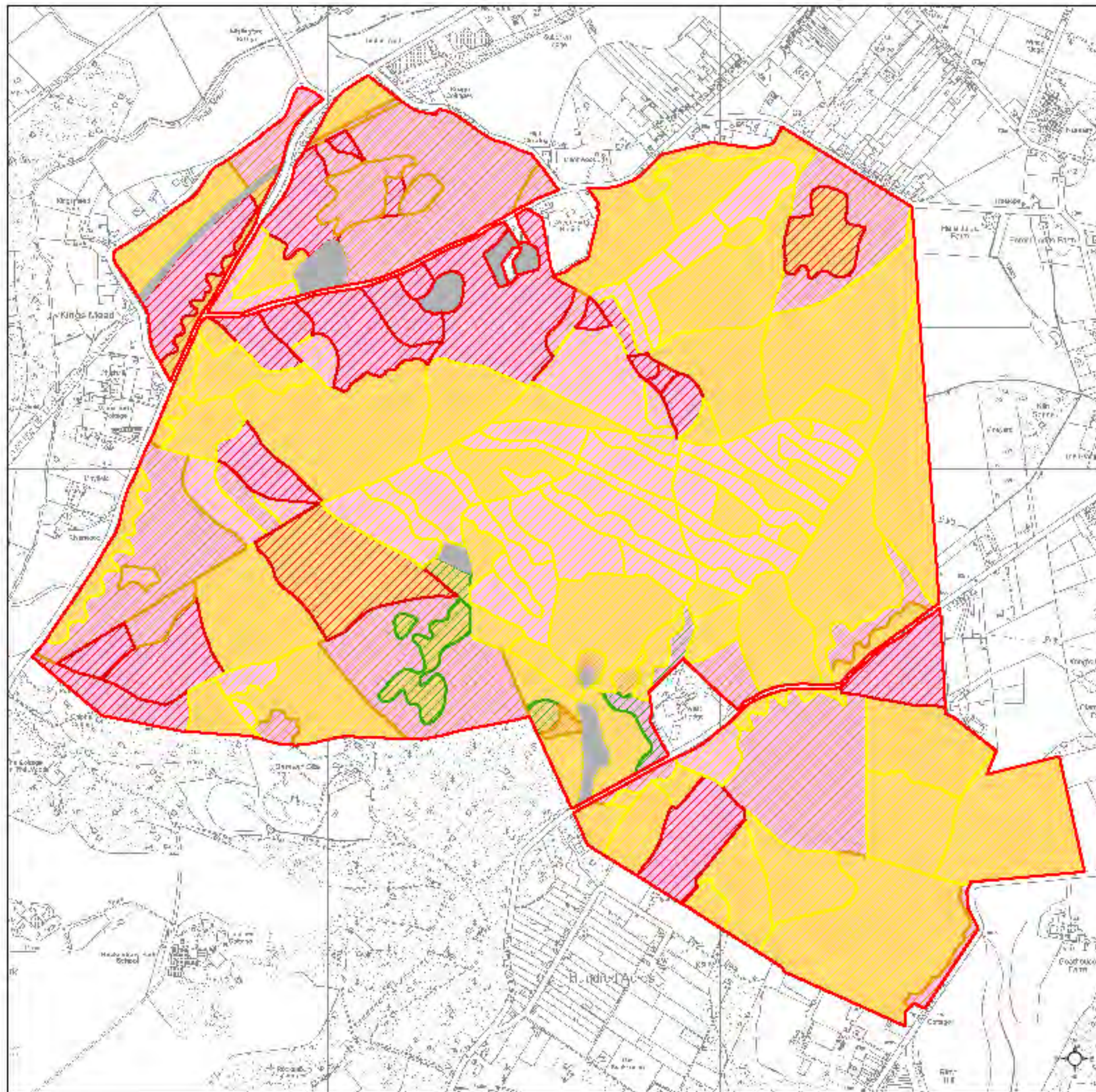
- Native Broadleaved Woodland Management.**
Manage under an appropriate shelterwood system, favouring best native tree and focussing on the production of quality timber.
- Maturing (>90 years old) Oak Woodland.**
Manage under an appropriate shelterwood system, favouring best native tree and focussing on the production of quality timber. In addition, implement regeneration fellings of up to 2 ha in total (unless otherwise stated) within the 10 year period.
- Native Broadleaved Woodland Restoration.**
Manage under an appropriate shelterwood system. Favour best native tree, focussing on the production of quality timber and the gradual reduction of non-native species to 20% of the canopy or less.
- Manage as open habitat**
- Road/Ride Edge Management.**
Enhance the woodland edge, developing a scalloped and graded structure in accordance with best practice guidelines.
- Agricultural**
- Car Park**
- Compartments** **Sub-Compartments**

Regeneration Felling Areas			
Compartment	Sub-Compartment	Maximum individual regeneration felling area (ha)	Maximum number of non-adjacent felling coupes
6300	a	1.3	1
6302	a	2	1
6303	b	2	1
6304	a	2	1
6306	d	0.5	1
6308	e	0.5	1
6309	6	0.5	1
6315	e	0.2	1
6317	b	0.7	1
6319	a	2	2



Key:

- KJ** Lime locations known in 2007
- L** Additional Lime locations
- N** Roman Ironworks locations











West Walk



Predicted Timeline for Intended Future Habitats



Key

-  Establish next generation of native broadleaved woodland by 2050
-  Establish next generation of native broadleaved woodland by 2100
-  Establish next generation of native broadleaved woodland by 2150
-  Establish next generation of native broadleaved woodland by 2200

-  Establish native broadleaved woodland by 2050
-  Establish native broadleaved woodland by 2100
-  Establish native broadleaved woodland by 2150
-  Establish native broadleaved woodland by 2200

-  Car Park/Picnic Area/Open
-  West Walk Management Area

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