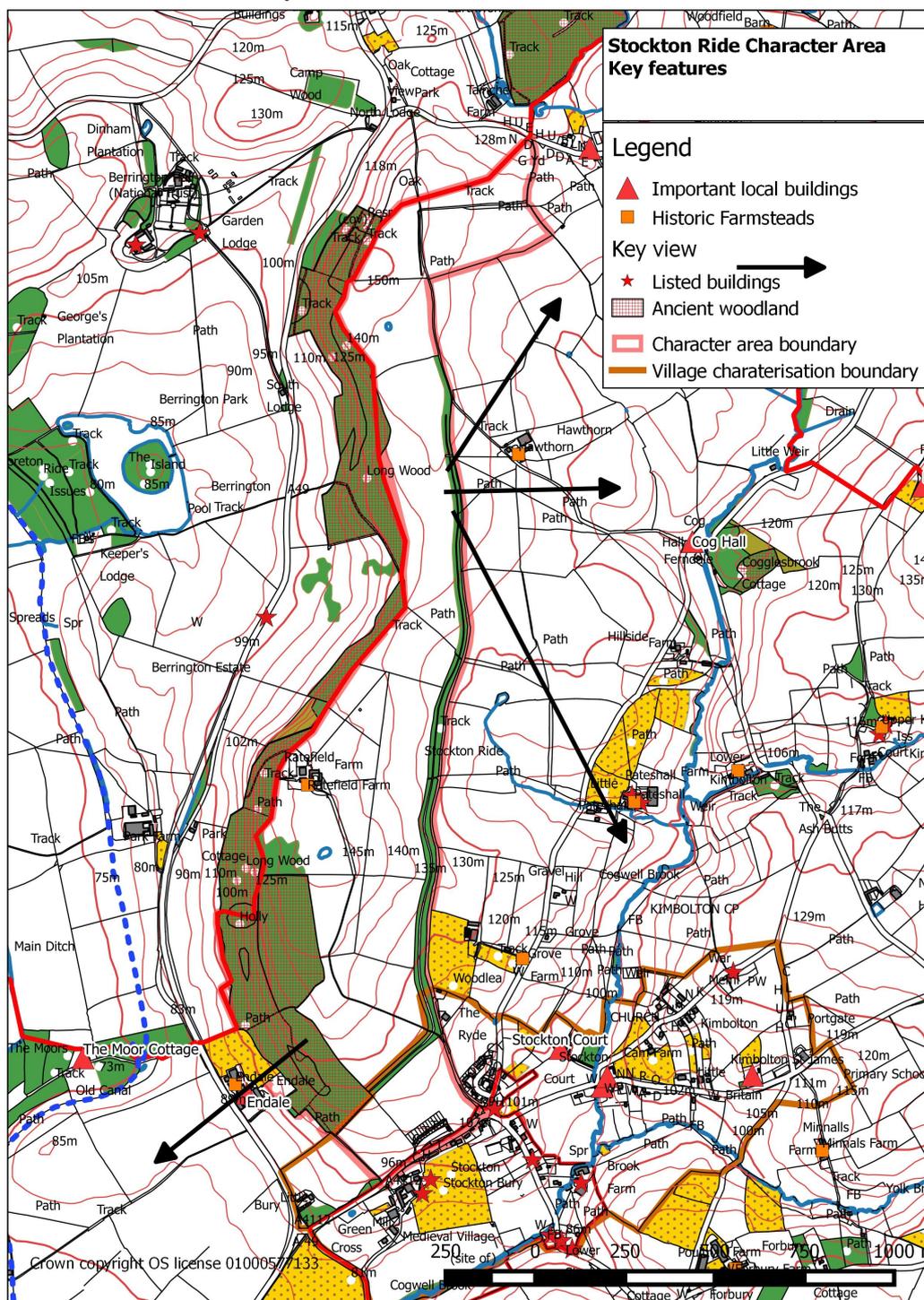


4.6 Stockton Ride Rural Character Area

4.6.1 Stockton forms the north-western part of the Parish and is entirely located within the Bromyard Plateau sub-regional Landscape Character Area. The majority of the area is within the Plateau Estate Farmlands Landscape Character Type with a small part of the southern area identified as Principal Wooded Hills.

Map 11 – Stockton Ride Character Area



4.6.2 Topography, landform and land use



Image 49 – the open, gently rising and enclosed farmland in the southern part of the area

4.6.3 This area is a long and narrow corridor of land some 2.5km from north to south and around 200-300m in width. It is predominantly made up of mixed farmland enclosed by the Long Wood to the west and a strip of woodland associated with Stockton Ride makes up much of the eastern boundary. A small part of Long Wood occupies the south-western part of the area. The area is elevated – sitting on the top of the steep wooded escarpment of the Bromyard Plateau as it rises out of the Herefordshire Lowlands. The topography is relatively flat – falling gradually from west to east and more steeply to the north towards Hundred Lane.

4.6.4 Roads, streets, routes

4.6.5 There are no public roads physically within the area. Stockton Ride is a public footpath (KB1) which connects the village with Hundred Lane. There is an unofficial footpath which runs off Ride Lane to give access to the southern end of Long Wood and used by local dog owners.

4.6.6 Historic features



Image 50 – remains of iron park fencing at Stockton Ride

- 4.6.7 Ratefield Farm is a historic farmstead and this, together with the adjacent converted barn, comprise the only buildings in this area.
- 4.6.8 There are sections of ornamental iron park fencing remaining at Stockton Ride which is a relic of Berrington Hall.
- 4.6.9 The Ride Lane is a historic route which makes up the great majority of the eastern boundary. It has a long history, potentially the line of the Roman Road which ran northwards from Stockton Cross. By 1835 the use of the route was limited to walkers and riders. The Quarter Sessions 1866-73 state that the 'Ride Road 'shall cease to be a highway which the said Parish of Kimbolton is liable to repair'.

4.6.10 Settlement pattern and buildings

- 4.6.11 Ratefield Farm is the only form of settlement in the area and is identified as a historic farmstead.

4.6.12 Landmarks



Image 51 - Kimbolton Church spire in the view south-east from Stockton Ride

4.6.13 The area is largely hidden from view by the woodland on the east, west and southern boundaries. These areas of woodland are key landmark features for the whole of the Parish and dominate the view when travelling north or south south along the A49, and provide the backdrop to Kimbolton village. The Church spire is visible from the area as are two large farmbuildings off Pateshall Lane.

4.6.14 Green and natural features

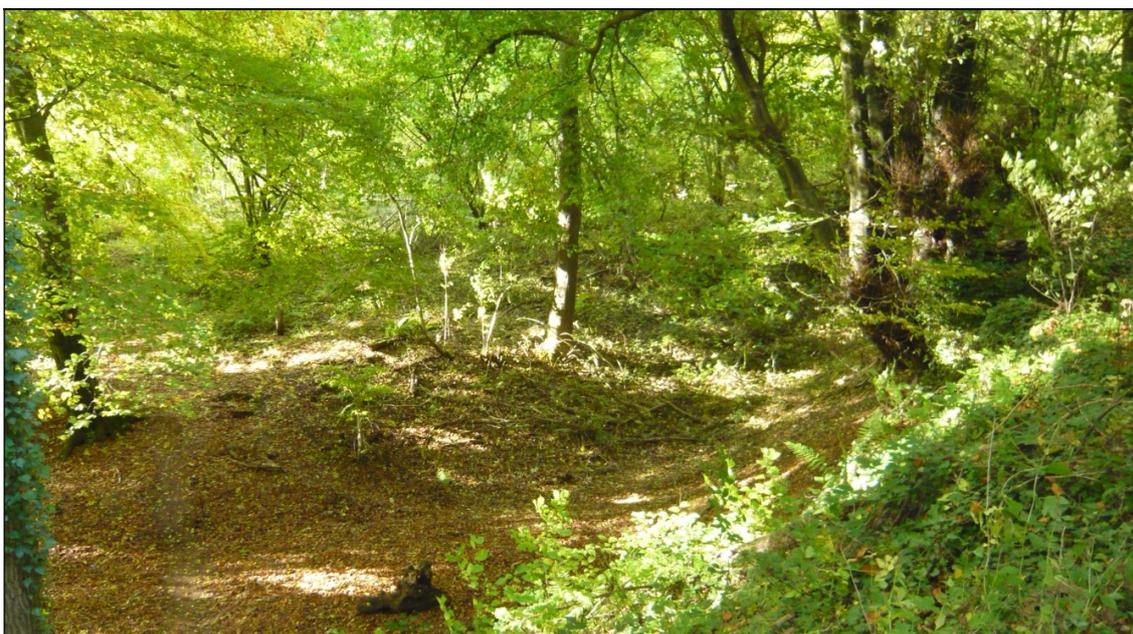


Image 52 – Long Wood Ancient Woodland from the south

4.6.15 The principal natural features are the two areas of woodland and the extensive network of hedgerows and associated hedgerow trees. Long Wood is classified as Ancient Woodland.

4.6.16 Views



Image 53 - the view north-west from the Northern End of Stockton Ride overlooking the Berrington Hall Estate

4.6.17 The elevated topography provides far reaching views – especially along Stockton Ride to the south and east. The view at the northern end of the Stockton Ride path is outstanding looking north to the Shropshire Hills and also west overlooking Berrington Park. From Gorsty Hill there are long views into the area which define the importance of the woodland to the landscape of Kimbolton. When heading north on the A49 the view to Long Wood sitting on the sky line is an important landscape feature. The key views are shown on Map 11.

4.6.18 Summary of key defining characteristics / other observations

4.6.19 The area is a long and narrow corridor of farmland enclosed by important areas of woodland which form key structural elements of the landscape of the Parish. Settlement is limited to one farmstead and elevated topography provides a number of key long distance views. Stockton Ride path is an important historic feature and provides a key route for walkers. The proximity of the A49 to the west is associated with some traffic noise but otherwise this is a peaceful area.

4.6.20 Management guidelines and priorities

4.6.21 The key priorities are:

- Conservation and management of Long Wood and Stockton Ride
- Conservation and enhancement of existing hedgerows.
- Maintain the dispersed settlement pattern and resist proposals for prominently located large scale buildings.

4.7 Summary of key features – the rural area

- 4.7.1 The fieldwork has confirmed the overall findings of the HCLA summarized in Section 3.0 of this Report – a deeply tranquil and peaceful area with a landscape that has largely survived the pressures of the modern world. The work has also added a much finer grain understanding – identifying the key buildings, views, historic and natural features which all combine to create a special and distinctive character.
- 4.7.2 The topography of the Parish is the dominant element of its character and sets the framework within which the landscape has evolved. A block of elevated rolling countryside makes up the eastern parts of the Parish, dominating the skyline as it arches north from Upper Hamnish to Gorsty Hill and Lever Hill. The settlement of Kimbolton is sheltered by this arc of upland, and stands at the confluence of a number of streams and brooks which drain from it. These include the Cogwell Brook in the north and the Yolk Brook in the centre.
- 4.7.3 The western parts of the Parish are very different. Here, the topography is flat, dominated by the floodplain of the River Lugg. The Long Wood escarpment rises steeply out of this lowland and marks the boundary between it and the elevated centre and east.
- 4.7.4 The countryside is well-treed and enclosed by an extensive network of hedgerows, particularly in the central and eastern parts of the Parish. In addition to their aesthetic value, hedgerows provide important habitats for a number of species, particularly mammals. Hedgerow survival in the western is disappointing with opportunities for enhancement and restoration. Orchards survive across the area, providing important wildlife habitats, and there are three unregistered parks and gardens including Hennor Court and Eaton Hill.
- 4.7.5 Settlement is of a low density and dispersed, made up of farmsteads, converted rural buildings and free-standing dwelling houses. The majority of rural dwellings are of a domestic scale using local materials with sandstone rubble the dominant building material. Grander properties are present but untypical, having the character of small estates and including Downs Farm and Brock Hall in the Hamnish Character area. There are two small hamlets – the Hundred and Hamnish, both of which contain a number of distinctive buildings. Modern development is limited, emphasising the need to ensure that new development respects the scale, character and appearance of existing buildings. The low density of development has resulted in much of the area having particularly clear night skies.
- 4.7.6 The area contains a rich legacy of historic buildings and has a strong sense of continuity evidenced in the Bache Hillfort, a Roman Road and extensive medieval settlement.
- 4.7.7 There is a huge variety of views – from long distance expansive vistas from the elevated east, to the more intimate and sheltered setting of the wooded streamside corridors around Kimbolton Village and Bache.