
Henbury Environmental Survey and Plan

Simon Browne

Henbury, May 11th 2010

Introduction

- Henbury Parish Council proposed a survey of the hedgerows and trees in the Parish in 2008.
- This was performed in spring and summer 2008 by Ed Pilkington, Cheshire East Countryside Ranger, and Simon Browne, Tree Warden, and was expanded to form a more general environmental survey.
- Report printed by the Parish Council July 2009 and distributed to major landowners.
- Basis is the landscape-scale conservation approach
- Initial hedge and tree planting work undertaken in early 2010

Wildlife Trusts: Living Landscape Project



- **Purpose:**

- *It is a strategic vision of our landscape that will help us create a resilient and healthy environment. We are identifying **key areas to protect for wildlife, enlarging, improving and joining them up**, across the UK; on nature reserves, in towns and cities, and in partnership with hundreds of other land-owners. We need a healthy natural environment to enable wildlife and people to adapt to a changing climate.*



The Cheshire ECOnet Approach



- A long-term vision for Cheshire (from the Council – led ECOnet)

*“The vision of the Cheshire ECOnet is to provide environmental, social and economic benefits for the people of Cheshire through the **creation and enhancement of an interconnected network of existing and new areas of nature** . By 2020 the present scattering of small islands of wild places will be expanded and linked by the creation of new habitats. Animals such as the otter, dormouse and barn owl will move freely across the landscape. “*

Henbury and Cheshire – Some Key Facts

- There are 628 Sites of Biological Importance in Cheshire, covering some 10,623 hectares.
 - Henbury Parish has four: Cock Wood, Big Wood, Highlees Wood, Redesmere
- Cheshire is nationally important for farm ponds, containing some 16,400 (or 10 per cent) of all those existing in England and Wales in 1985.
 - A simple count suggests more than 80 ponds in the Parish (0.05% of the total of England and Wales!)

Henbury and Cheshire – Some Key Facts

- *“According to a Forestry Commission census (1979-1982), Cheshire possesses more freestanding trees per square kilometre than other counties, at nearly 2 million. These freestanding trees are a legacy of the 18th and 19th century, and unfortunately approximately 60% of the trees are over-mature and in a state of decline.”*
- This is very true of Henbury – many field and hedgerows trees are being lost and are currently not being replaced. Consideration should be given to extensive hedgerow restoration and tree planting.
- *“Britain has lost more than 95% of its unimproved grasslands and, since 1939, the Cheshire region has lost 99%. In the 1997 Cheshire Grassland Inventory only 860ha of unimproved grasslands were found.”*
- There remain a very small number of pockets of unimproved grassland in the Parish– these offer a very high wildlife value and their protection should be encouraged.

Survey Results and Plan

Henbury - Overview

- The approximate make-up of the Parish is below:

Land type	Area (ha)	% of Parish
Agricultural (arable)	80	7.8%
Agricultural (grassland - semi-improved/improved)	667	65.4%
Agricultural (grassland - unimproved)	6	0.6%
Estate parkland	130	12.7%
Henbury village	12	1.2%
Other (farms, ponds etc)	30	2.9%
Woodland	95	9.3%

Woods



Woods



Woods



Hedges



Hedges



Hedges



Hedges



Grassland



Grassland



Grassland



Grassland



Grassland



Ponds



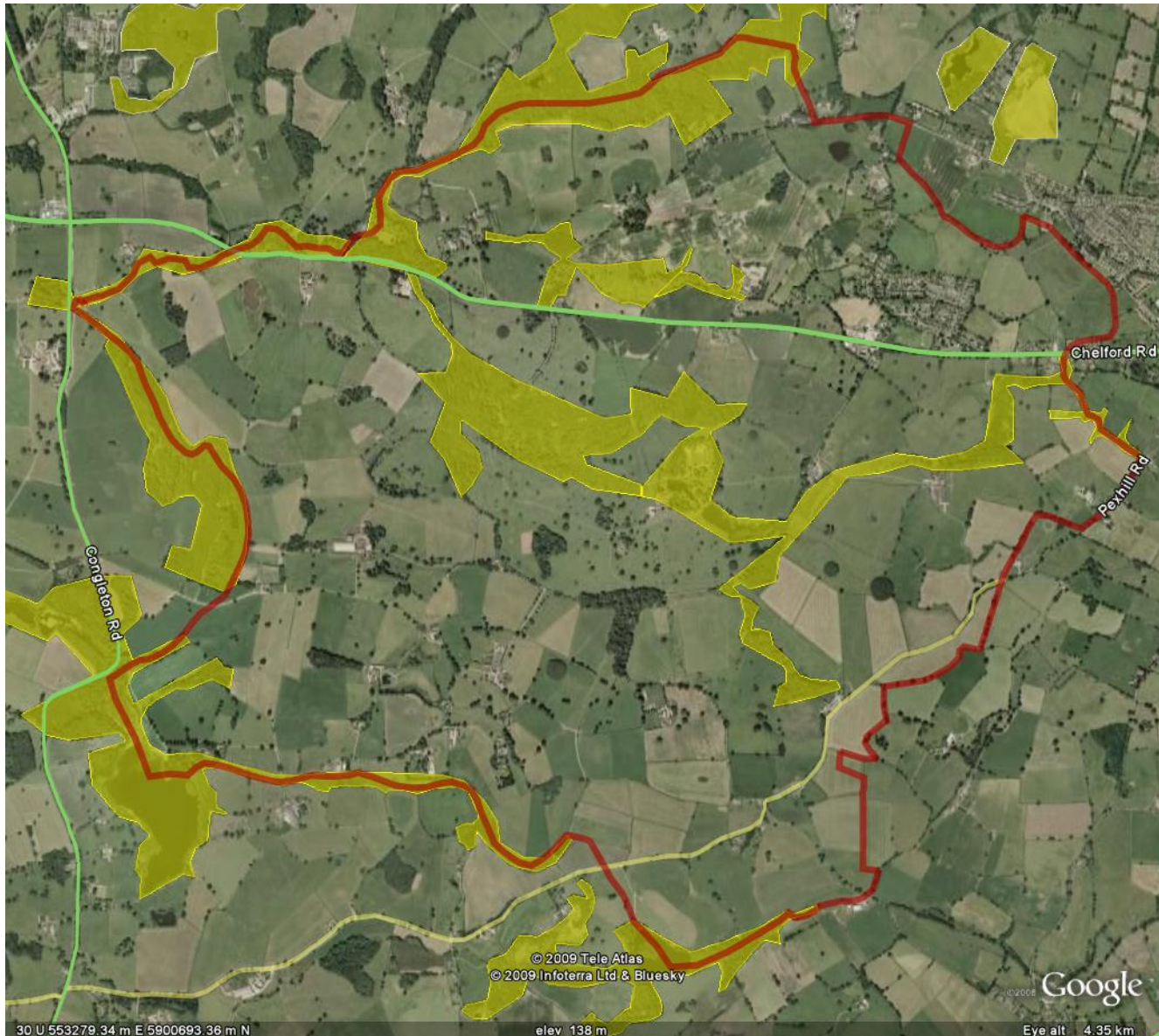
Ponds



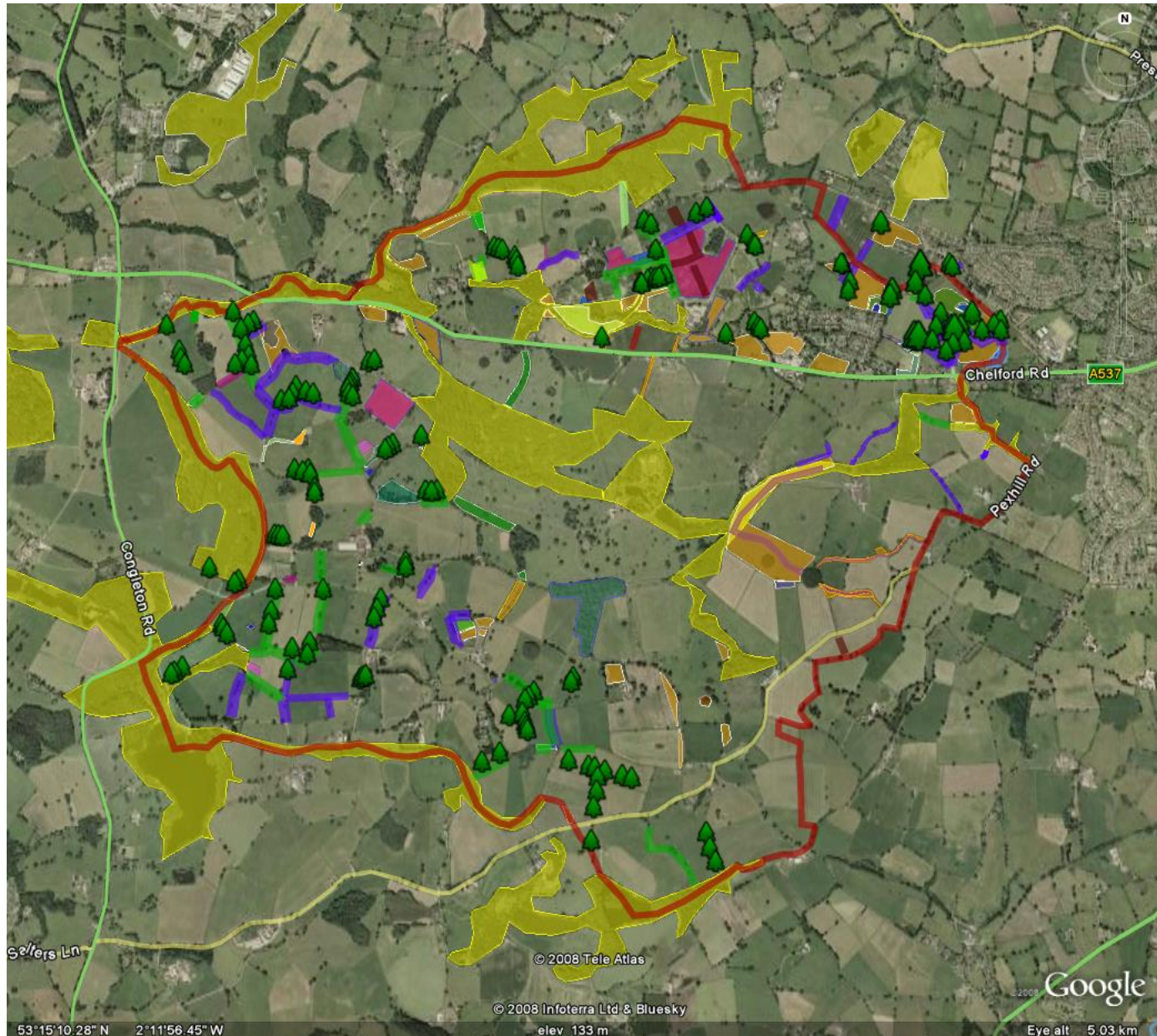
Ponds



Key Areas and Links in Henbury



Plan for Conservation and Enhancement

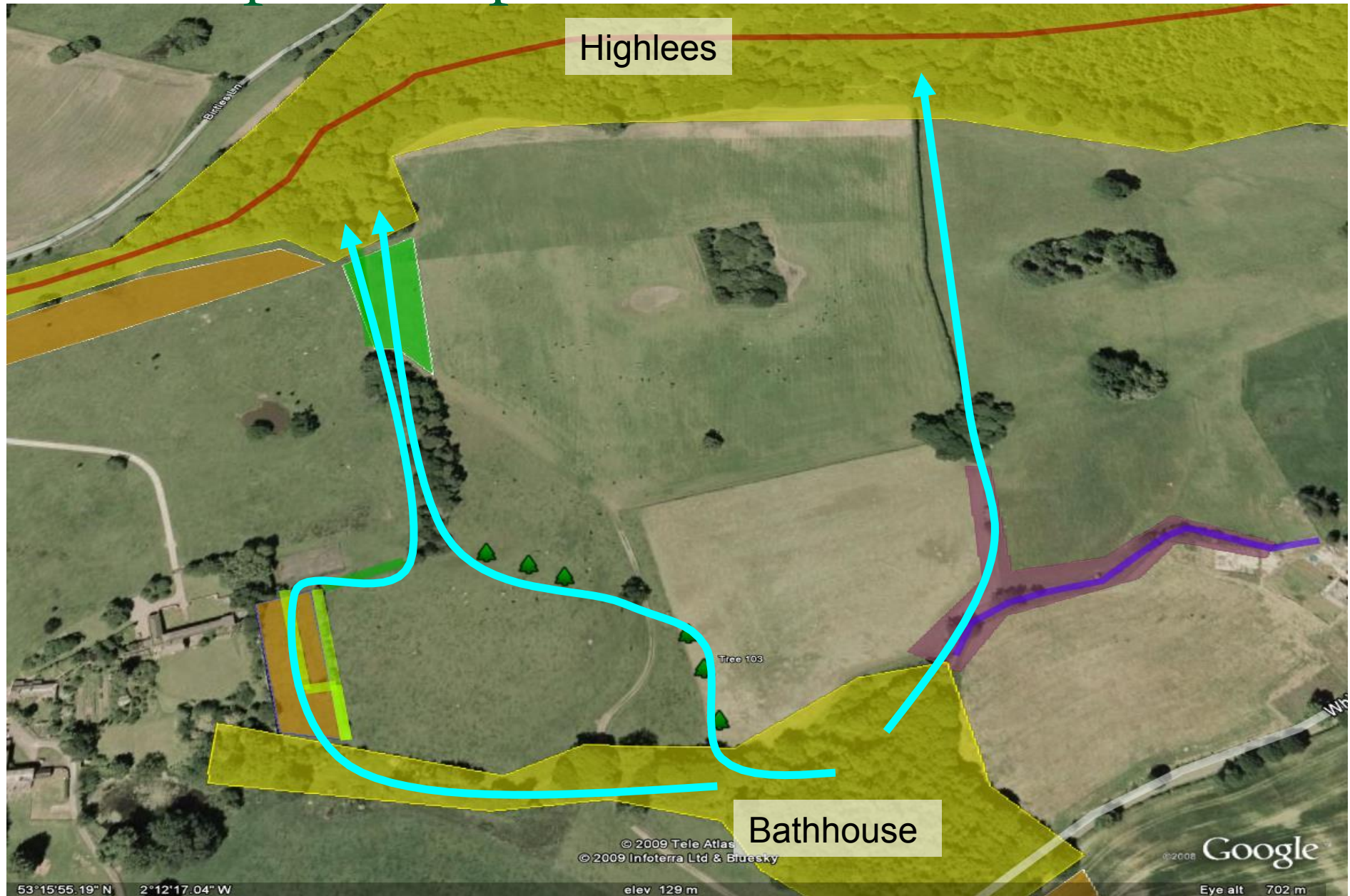


Example Output



Marl pit

Example Output



Hedge Planting

- Three sections of new hedgerow have been planted totaling c.250m.
- Plants and guards funded by Henbury Parish Council.
- Fencing installed by farmers on Springbank and Marlheath farms and on Longmoss farmland.

Longmoss



Springbank Farm



Marlheath Farm



Marlheath Farm



Tree Planting

- 250 Trees have been provided by Cheshire Landscape Trust in 2010.
- There were planted across the Parish in both large and small groupings, following on from the 100 trees planted in 2009.
- Henbury Parish Council funded the support materials – rabbit guards, posts, barbed wire..
- The farmers provided the main fencing

Marlheath Farm



Rough Heys



Longmoss



Longmoss



Longmoss



Whirley School

**THE
GREAT
BRITISH
ELM
EXPERI-
MENT
Y**

Mrs Jones – retiring this year
– plants a special elm.



Acknowledgements

- Ed Pilkington / Cheshire East Council
- Henbury Parish Council
- James Baggaley / Cheshire East Council
- Mark Ambrose and Charlotte Harris / Cheshire Wildlife Trust
- Joe Winstanley / Agri-Environment
- Mark Stubbs / Natural England
- Cheshire Landscape Trust
- rECOrd for local species records
- Ray Evans (Macclesfield RSPB)
- David Kitching (Cheshire dragonflies)
- All landowners allowing access and agreeing for work to be done.

Hedge and Tree Planters!

- Harold and Janet Bailey
- Rex Beach
- Roger Cousin
- Sir Francis Graham-Smith
- Huw Davies
- Robin West
- Trevor Davies
- April Martin
- Paul and James Miller
- Matthew Wood
- Tom (Marlheath)



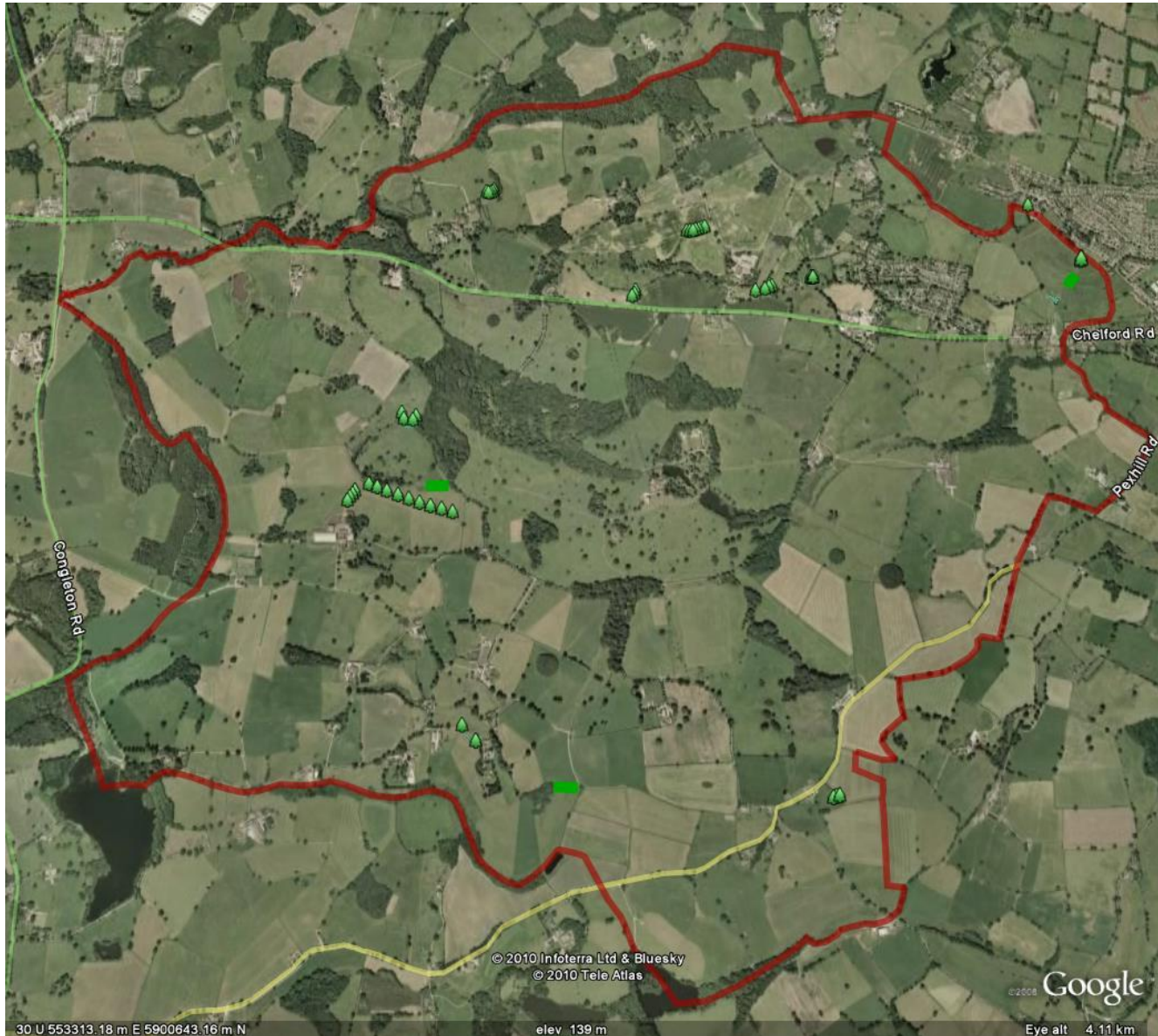
Hedgerow Management

- Plant up gaps
- Cut on a 2-3 year basis except where along roads or public rights of way
- Cutting is best performed in Jan/Feb, but certainly outside of Mar 1st – July 31st to avoid disturbing nesting birds
- Encourage growth of standard trees within hedge lines

Tree and Woodland Management

- Favour native species over non-natives in thinning and new planting
- Control invasive species in woods where not desired (such as rhododendron)
- Allow varying woodland canopy density to benefit ground flora
- Protect hedgerow and in-field trees.
- Give special focus to veteran trees – these support the most wildlife
- Replace lost trees and encourage new planting/regeneration in appropriate areas
- Allow dead-wood habitat (standing and fallen) to establish in woodlands

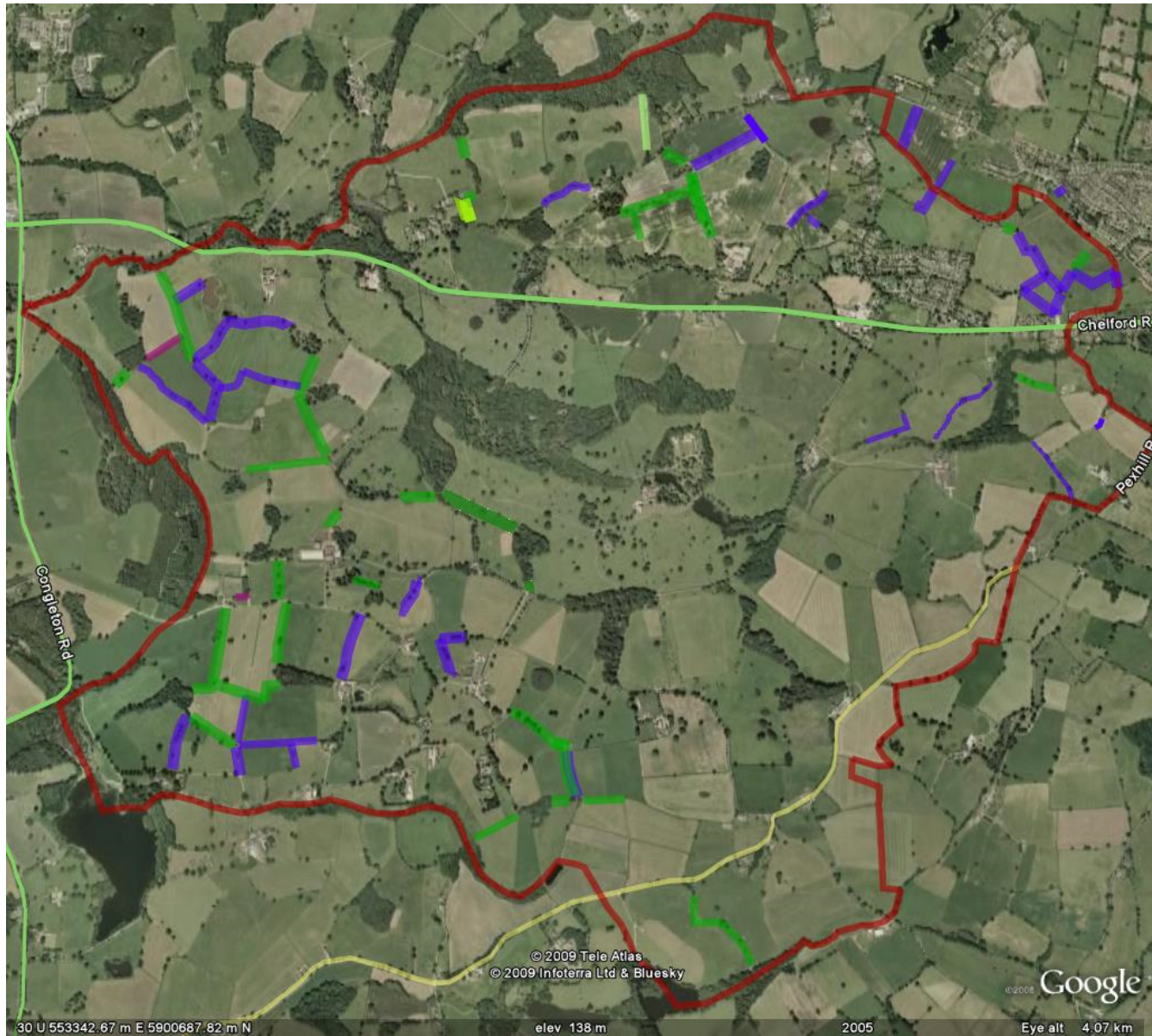
2010 Activities



Next Steps

- Work with the Parish Plan output
- Continue practical work to enhance the landscape/habitat value
- Offer support and encouragement to landowners to consider environmental issues
- Seek funding from additional sources
- Liaise with neighbouring parishes to assist them in performing similar activities where there is interest – also with Cheshire Wildlife Trust to highlight the benefits of this approach
- Perform further surveys – and encourage species recording across the Parish

Example: Proposed Hedgerow Restoration



Summary

- The Henbury environmental project is well underway
- We have an initial plan to take forward with landowners
- We have a parish council that is actively supporting the project
- We have an enthusiastic group of volunteers who have shown what can be achieved
- We have a number of landowners who are very sympathetic to its aims

References

- *Entry Level Stewardship Handbook*. (Natural England, 2008).
- *Higher Level Stewardship Handbook*. (Natural England, 2008).
- *Making Wildflower Meadows*. Lewis, P. (Frances Lincoln, 2003)
- *Habitat Management for Invertebrates*. Kirby, P. (RSPB, 2001)
- *Managing Habitats for Conservation*. Sutherland, W.J and Hill, D.A. (Eds). (Cambridge University Press, 1995)
- *Woodland and Wildlife*. Kirby, K. (Whittet Books, 1992)

Links

- <http://www.basc.org.uk/>
- <http://www.bats.org.uk/>
- <http://www.brocross.com/dfly/dfly.htm>
- <http://www.cheshire-biodiversity.org.uk/>
- http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/environment/planning/nature_conservation.aspx
- <http://www.cheshirewildlifetrust.co.uk/>
- <http://www.landis.org.uk/soilscapes/>
- <http://maps.cheshire.gov.uk/econet/>
- <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/>
- <http://www.plantlife.org.uk>
- <http://www.record-lrc.co.uk/>
- <http://www.rspb.org.uk/>
- http://www.searchnbn.net/index_homepage/index.jsp
- <http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/>
- <http://www.henburyvillage.org.uk>