

The Parish of Frittenden

HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISATION

REVISION OF KENT HLC (2000)



December 2016

THE REVISION OF THE KENT HLC

FOR

THE BOROUGH

OF

ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS

Summary Report

Parish of Frittenden

Dr Nicola R. Bannister ACIFA
Landscape History & Conservation

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The parish summary should be read in conjunction with the Tunbridge Wells Borough Historic Landscape characterisation Report (Section I User Guide and Interpretation; Section II The Gazetteer of HLC Types and Section III the Maps).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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My colleague Phil Sansum kindly undertook the processing of the missing Tithe maps for the Borough for which I am very grateful.

The views expressed in this report are entirely the author's own and do not reflect the policies of neither Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, Kent County Council nor the High Weald AONB.

PERIOD TABLE

| Description | Archaeological Period | From | To |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| Hunting societies | Upper Palaeolithic | 30,000 | 10,000 BC |
| Hunter-gather societies | Mesolithic | 10,000-8,000 | 4,000-3,500 BC |
| The first agriculturalists | Neolithic | 3,500 | 2,100 BC |
| Beginning of metal working in bronze | Bronze Age | 2,100 | 600 BC |
| Beginning of metal working in iron | Iron Age | 600 BC | AD 43 |
| | Romano-British | AD 43 | AD 410 |
| | Anglo-Saxons [or Early Medieval] | AD 410 | 1066 |
| | Medieval | 1066 | 1540 |
| | Post-medieval | 1540 | Present |

The Archaeological and Historical Periods used in the Sussex HLC & Revised Kent HLC

| Key to HLC-Prev | Description | Date | Combined |
|------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| P1 | Late 20th century | AD1945 – present | Post 1900 |
| P2 | Early 20th century | AD 1914 – AD 1945 | |
| P3 | Early Modern | AD 1800 – AD 1913 | 19th century |
| P4 | Late Post-medieval | AD 1600 – AD 1799 | Post-medieval |
| P5 | Early Post-medieval | AD 1500 – AD 1599 | |
| P6 | Medieval | AD 1066 – AD 1499 | Medieval |
| P7 | Early-medieval | AD 410 – AD 1065 | |
| P8 | Roman | AD 43 – AD 409 | |
| P9 | Prehistoric | 500,000 BC – AD42 | |

**Summary Assessment of the Historic Landscape Characterisation
for the parish of Frittenden
Borough of Royal Tunbridge Wells**

1. Introduction

Historic Landscape Characterisation [HLC] is a process by which the landscape of an area is interpreted and mapped by selected historic attributes which contribute to the local historic character. The dominant historic attributes are that of enclosure and settlement. The pattern of fields, the nature of the boundaries, the form and distribution of historic settlement shape the local character and distinctiveness of a given area. The term ‘historic landscapes’ means in this context all landscapes which have been shaped by human interaction. HLC maps character not land use though with finer grained HLCs for some of the historic types reflect the use of the land. It can be likened to a fine water-colour painting which despite using OSMM as its base does result in some ‘blurred’ boundaries between character types at the very detailed field by field level. HLC is a starting point when investigating the historic landscape for any given area, however it is not a substitute for detailed desk-based assessments and field observations.

The Historic Landscape Characterisation for Frittenden forms part of a district wide revision of the Kent HLC (2000). Four parishes in the east of the district have been completed on behalf of the High Weald AONB (Goudhurst, Hawkhurst, Cranbrook & Benenden) and the remaining parishes are being undertaken as part of a rolling programme of phased characterisation for Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. As each parish is completed a short analysis is presented. The parishes will then be grouped up to form the district-wide HLC. The sequence of characterisation has been prioritised to provide firstly information on those parishes close to the town of Royal Tunbridge Wells, and secondly to complete the wider countryside of the borough. The centre of the built-up area of the town has been omitted as the priority is to characterise the historic landscape of the rural parts of the borough.

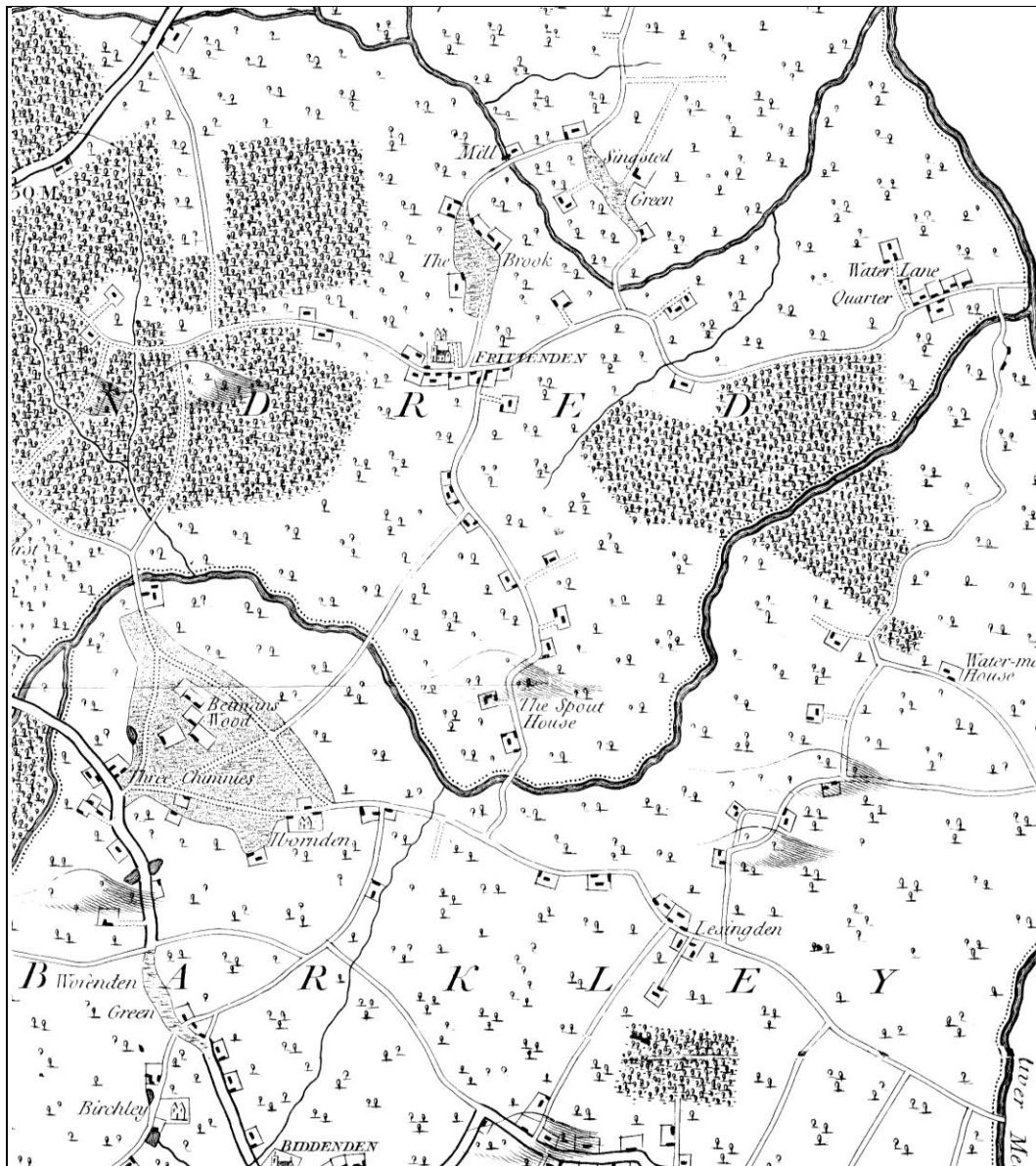
This report sets out a summary of some of the results for the civil parish of Frittenden. A Methods Report [Draft] together with a Gazetteer of Typologies and attributes has been prepared for the end of the first phase of this revision (end of September 2016). The parish of Frittenden together with the following three parishes (Capel, Horsmonden and Brenchley) form the second phase of the Kent HLC (2001) and the third phase for the remaining parishes (Bidborough, Lamberhurst, Paddock Wood and Sandhurst) will commence in January 2017. At the end a summary report for the Tunbridge Wells Borough HLC will be prepared.

2. Historic context of parish of Frittenden

The civil parish of Frittenden coincides with the historic ecclesiastical parish boundary. A remote parish, Frittenden lies on the southern edge of the Low Weald with its southern edge bounding the edge of the High Weald. The northern and eastern parish boundaries comprise streams and tributaries of the River Beult including the Hammer Stream; whilst the southern and western boundaries wind through the coppice woods by Sissinghurst abutting the parish of Cranbrook. Edward Hasted describes in 1797 that Frittenden had “*an unpleasant and forlorn aspect. The soil is a deep, stiff clay, very wet and*

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unkindly for tillage, insomuch that, in a rainy season, the occupiers have but little produce from their lands...." (Hasted 1797 VII p113). He continues The southern part of it [parish] is entirely covered with coppice wood; besides which the shaves are frequent, and the hedge-rows broad round the fields, which have quantities of large oaks interspersed throughout them. (ibid)



Extract from Hasted Hundreds of Cranbrook and Barkley (1797)

The underlying geology is dominated by the Weald Clay formation, with outcrops of Paludina limestone at Lashenden and in the centre of the parish on which the scattered village of Frittenden is located. There are also deposits of clay iron stone along the Hammer Stream and Sinkhurst Green. These deposits of stone have been exploited in the past and the legacy survives in the form of the numerous ponds lying in field corners or within areas of woodland (some which is designated ancient semi-natural). There have been a number of artefact finds within the parish which date to the Romano-British period and all indicate that some form of settlement and iron exploitation was taking place immediately before and

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during the Roman occupation. These include a possible occupation site at Bettenham Manor and another between Upper and Little Peasridge Farm. A large intact Romano-British urn was found in Legges Wood in the 19th century (Kent HER).

After AD 450 with the coming and settling in Kent of the Saxons the Weald was divided into large 'commons' attached to large agricultural estates in north and east Kent. Kent was carved up to utilise large swathes of the landscape. These estates became the lathes the territories of which spread into the Weald to lay claim to the woodland and grazing pastures. These commons were used for seasonal grazing but were gradually broken up into dens or swine pastures attached to the evolving manors located in the north and east on the demesne and farmed land. Eventually temporary settlements in the dens became permanent farmsteads taking their names from the 'dens' and the settlers enclosed land and laid out fields from the swine pastures in order to cultivate crops and keep stock.

Frittenden being in the Low Weald is located within the heart of the Wealden swine pasture area, where it joins with the higher lands of the High Weald. The historic settlement pattern together with place-name evidence preserves the wood pasture and wooded landscape origin. Four Wealden commons for Anglo-Saxon lathes extend through Frittenden (Witney 1976, p39). The dens evolving from these commons are summarised in the Table below. The legacy of the swine pastures survives in the north-east-south-west orientated lanes and bridle paths traversing the parish. A number of the historic farmsteads have evolved from many of these dens. Witney has identified Frittenden as an early 'inga' folk name, together with Whatsunden and Wellinghurst, which again indicates early Saxon settlement in this area.

Table 1. Summary Table of Wealden Dens in Frittenden

| LATHE WEALDEN COMMONS | HOLLINGBOURNE | ROYAL MANOR OF FAVERSHAM | STURRY | ROYAL MANOR OF WYE | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|---|--------------------------------|
| | | | | | |
| LATHE MANORS | Lenham (Priory St Augustines) | Faversham (King) | Chilham (Odo de Bayeaux) | Hothfield | Wye – Yoke of Henwood |
| | | | | | |
| WEALDEN DENS | Tolhurst (Tulverhurst) | Whatsunden | Wellinghurst (south of Bubhurst) | Land between Lashenden Cross and Ibornden | Between Ibornden and Lashenden |
| | Frittenden (x2 dens) | Bubhurst (Great and Little) | Stephurst (on Biddenden, Headcorn & Frittenden parish boundry) | | |
| | Comden (Cumbden) | Fernhurst alias Coldharbour | Brickenden (between Brissenden and Hareplaine) | | |
| | | Ayleswade (alias Halsnod) | | | |

The dens in red are ones identified as Manors by Edward Hasted 1797 (VII p113-119). Those in green are 'folk names identified by (Witney 1976 p198)

To the west of Frittenden lie The Brook and Sinkhurst Green, which are possible remnants of the wood pasture commons lying between den territories. There was also a common at Frittenden just west of Upper Peasridge or Manor Farm. Interestingly Hasted does not identify Frittenden itself as a manor.

Edward Hasted in 1797 describes the landscape of the parish Frittenden as being wooded especially around the southern edge, with numerous shaws, deep and miry roads – a remote and poor area. He is describing a medieval landscape which had remained relatively unaltered for centuries. However by the beginning of the 19th century improvements to farming systems led to some farmsteads being rebuilt and fields being re-organised around them. New farms were also laid out. In the process large groups of medieval and early post-medieval field systems were reorganised. In the late 20th century large areas of the medieval landscape were swept away as intensive arable farming spread across the south and east of the parish. However the remaining boundaries have a strong probability of being those boundaries between historic farms, manor and dens.

3. Results of the revised HLC for the parish of Frittenden

Some examples of the digitising of Frittenden parish as part of the wider revised HLC for the borough of Tunbridge Wells are presented in the map extracts on the following pages. The first phase of this project has been completed and is presented in a GIS project for the parishes of Speldhurst, Southborough, Royal Tunbridge Wells and Pembury. The completion of Frittenden completes Phase 2 of the revised HLC for Tunbridge Wells Borough. The remaining four parishes (Bidborough, Paddock Wood, Lamberhurst and Sandhurst form Phase 3 to be undertaken in the New Year). Only a brief analysis of the HLC attributes is presented here. The HLC has been split into its main period and type component attributes, but by applying the different style sheets it is possible to show the various attributes for the present day HLC, as well as a conjectured image of what the historic character of the late medieval and early-post-medieval landscape might have looked like.

3.1 The Phase 1 Kent HLC

Map 1 shows the broad HLC type for the Kent Phase 1 for the civil parish of Frittenden. The Kent was one of the earliest HLCs to be undertaken in England and was produced using a very broad-brush approach to characterisation. The broad character areas of Frittenden can clearly be seen. Its rural character is shown by the extensive area of Field patterns with settlement centred around the village. The southern edge of the parish where it abuts the High Weald retains more of its woodland landscape.

3.2 The Revised Kent HLC for Tunbridge Wells Borough – Frittenden

Map 2 shows the broad HLC type for the revised Kent HLC for Tunbridge Wells Borough. The finer-grained approach to the data capture can clearly be seen for example with the scattered settlements across the parish. The parkland attached to Frittenden House is revealed. Larger areas of woodland lie to the south of the parish but there is a higher incidence of woodland extending towards the north east.

3.3. The HLC Types for present day landscape of Frittenden

Map 3 shows the HLC types for Frittenden. Immediately it can be seen that large parts of the parish are dominated by modern field amalgamation leaving two areas where the historic character still survives. The loss of so many boundaries is the result of modern farming techniques dating from the mid-C19. Field enlargement coincided with both the development and installation of clay land drains. The installation of land drains was easier in larger fields and these new layouts were suitable for more intensive arable farming. Although field re-organisation started in the C19 associated with reorganisation of farmsteads and the

building of new farm centres, most boundary loss took place in the late 20th century as part of the aggressive farming techniques. Small fields could no accommodate the larger machinery. Remnants of the assart system lie close to assart woodlands in the south and west of the parish, for example at Legges Wood and Sissinghurst Park Wood. North of Frittenden village also lie areas of assart fields. The areas of Formal planned fields are evidence of field reorganisation in the late post-medieval and modern periods. Interestingly around Frittenden itself are fields which suggest a system of consolidated strip fields. The pattern of historic scattered settlement is also revealed. Hasted states in 1797 that there only 70 houses in the parish, with the small village standing on a hill in the middle of the parish with the church,(Hasted VII p114). This pattern still survives today.

Modern paddocks are a feature around the farms. There has been relatively little modern gentrification of farmsteads in the 20th century. However the 19th century parkland at Frittenden House and at Combden still do survive.

Hop growing was an extensive land use and dominated the early 19th century character. These were difficult to identify on the 1940 RAF AP and the limit on time meant that a systematic search of the Tithe map schedules was not undertaken. Thus some of the areas identified as orchards may have been hop gardens.

3.4 The Time-depth and antiquity of the present landscape of Frittenden

Map 4 shows the projected period of origin for each historic character type in the present landscape of Frittenden based on the historic map evidence and understanding of the Kent landscape. Essentially Frittenden is a landscape dominated by Early modern and 20th century historic character under-pinned by the medieval structure of routeways, historic settlement and woodlands. Early medieval and medieval character is confined to the areas of woodland and associated assart fields with scattered medieval farmsteads. Despite the extensive boundary loss and field –reorganisation in the modern period and subsequent parts of the parish still retains much of its medieval character and 20th century

Elements of that past historic landscape character still may survive within the present landscape, for example some of the field boundaries for the older field systems in the areas of modern field amalgamation or within the golf course. These boundaries are also the remnants of the older parishes, manors, and farmsteads.

3.5 Analysis of different character types

Map 5 shows only the HLC broad type for Enclosures by HLC type for Frittenden. This is an example of how the HLC can be queried in order to assess the different historic character types. The rural landscape is dominated by the patterns of enclosures and it can be seen that Frittenden is dominated by modern field amalgamation and smaller paddocks, the result of agricultural improvements and changes in cropping regimes in the modern era, associated with one estate in particular. For example some of the modern fields were once divided into 10 to fifteen individual assart fields. This has significantly opened up the landscape. The medieval field pattern has also been altered in the north of the parish but still retains fields of a modest size. The medieval field pattern still survives around the village and to the north around The Brook and Sinkhurst Green.

Map 6 gives an indication of this where the same polygons have been illustrated by the Boundary type attribute. Wooded hedges and shaws tend to occur in the southern part of the parish where it abuts the edge of the High Weald. Smaller managed hedges occur across the north of the parish with areas of ditched fields lying along the edge of the Hammer Stream. Large modern fields still retain the outer boundaries and shaws, with others having only grass balks.

3.6. The conjectured medieval and early post-medieval landscape of Frittenden

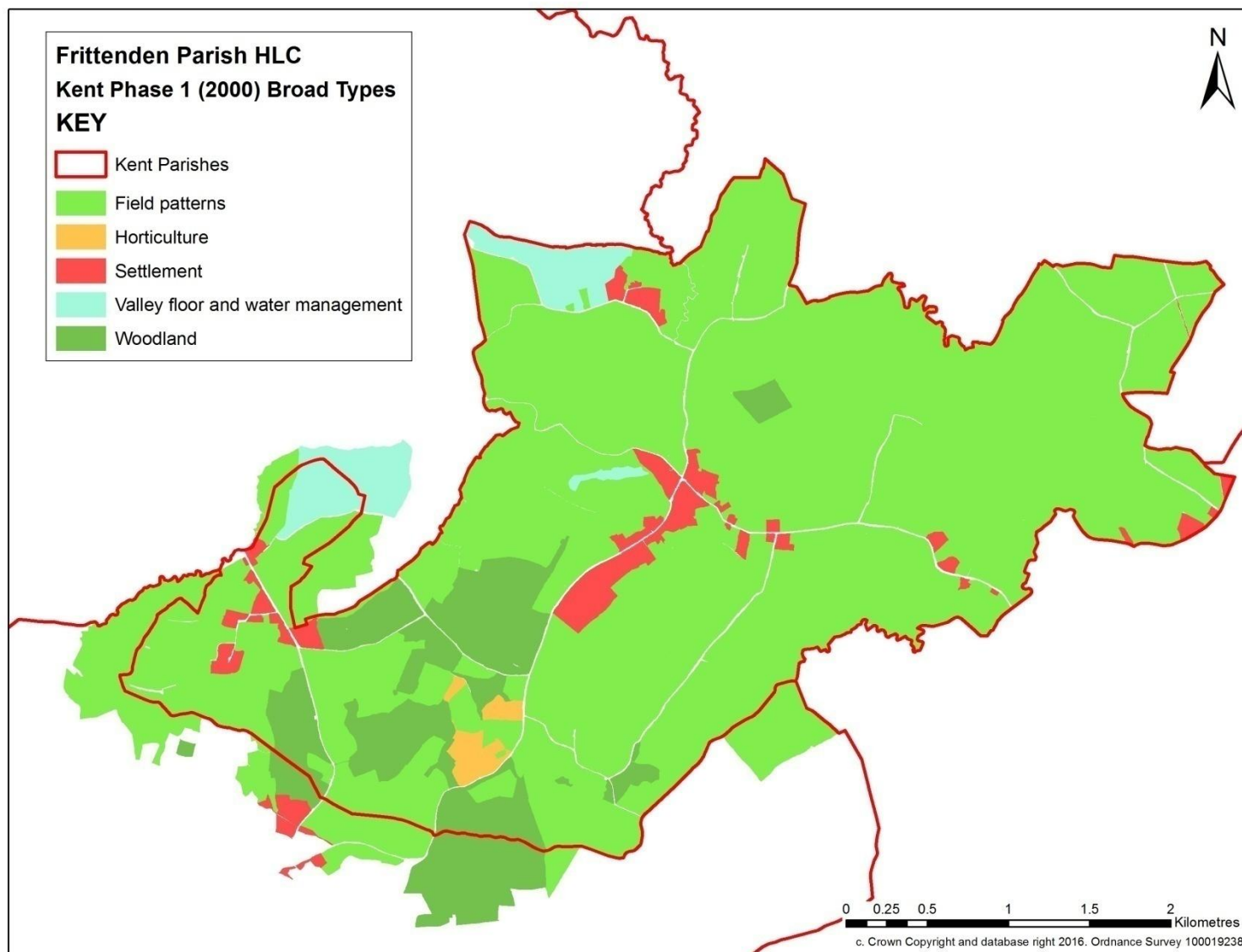
Map 7 is a composite map of the present HLC overlain with those polygons where the previous historic character can be identified from the historic mapping. Each time there is a character change as shown by the historic maps (up to 4 changes recorded in the GIS attribute table as Prev1 to Prev 4) this has been captured in the data base. The result is that this map gives an indication of what the landscape may have appeared like c.1500-1600, when much the medieval features would still have been intact.

This is the landscape that Hasted describes being wooded, especially around the southern edge, giving it a gloomy aspect due to the woods and the numerous spreading oaks. These oaks would have occupied the wooded shaws and hedges of the medieval field pattern which is indicated by the dominance of cohesive (or semi-planned assart fields). A group of co-axial type fields occur near Bubhurst. Groups of Consolidated strip fields lie to the east of the village indicating medieval field layout through gavelkind inheritance.

An interesting group of fields lie at Great Hungerford forming an outlier extending into the parish of Headcorn. A similar group occurs at the edge of Lashenden in the north east. Tolhurst (a former den of the Manor of Hollingbourne) is another outlier farm included within the parish. The wooded landscape to the south had very little settlement.

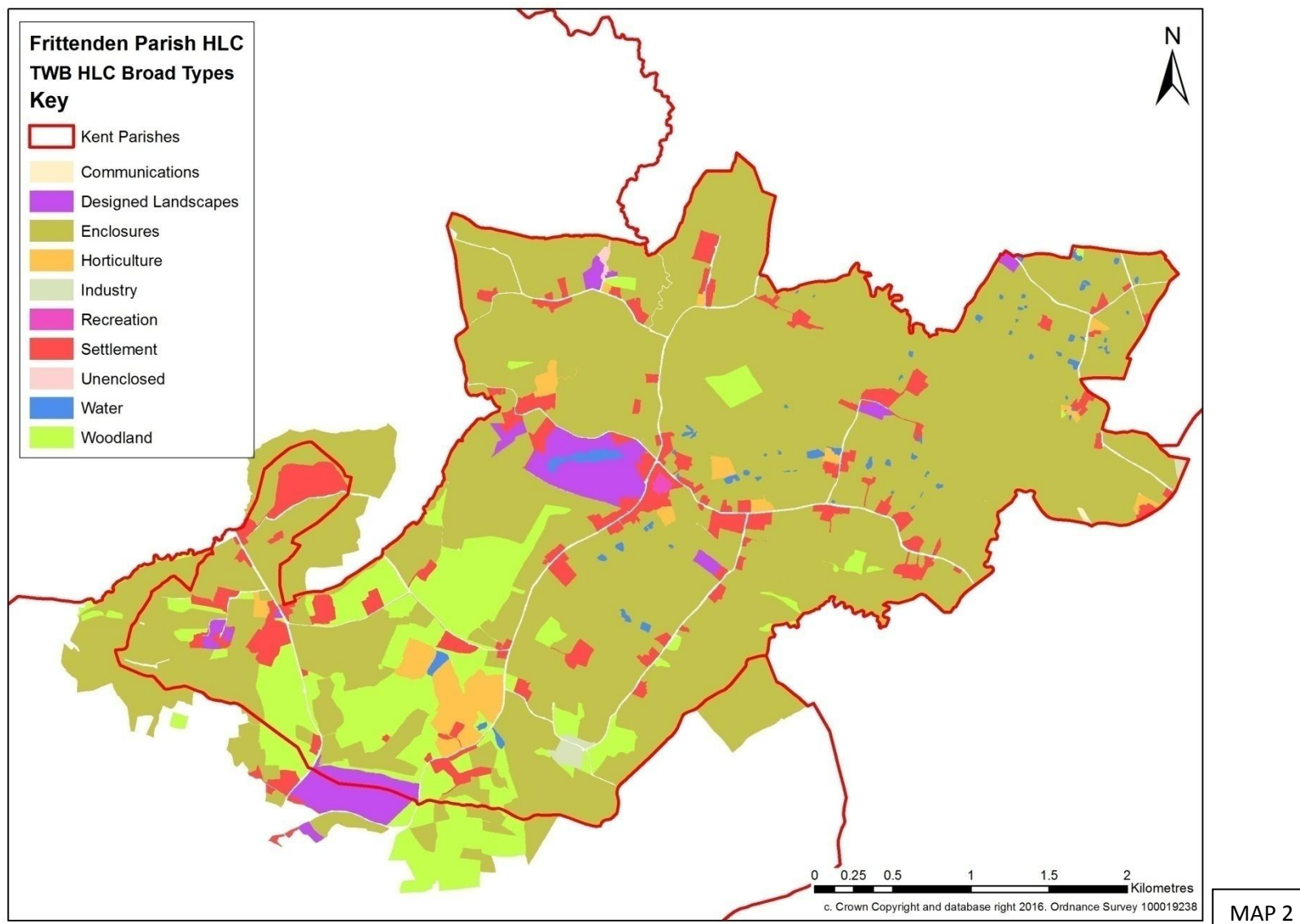
The origins and antiquity of the regular informal fields is difficult to assess, but these fields could date from the early post-medieval due to field re-organisation or may even be medieval in date. As a field pattern it occurs across much of the parish but most frequently on the eastern side. Further analysis of this field type is needed to understand their origins.

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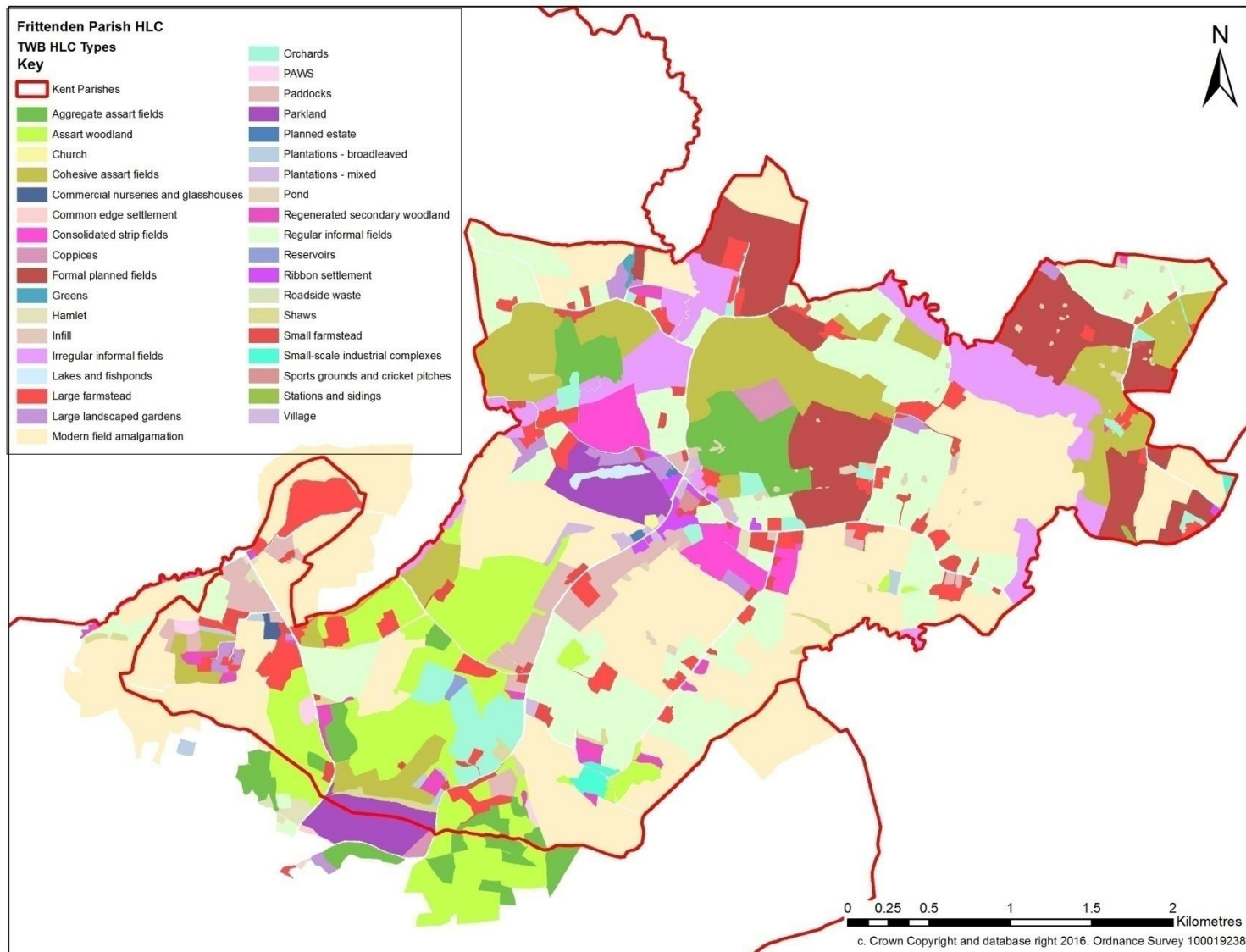


MAP 1

BOROUGH OF ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS
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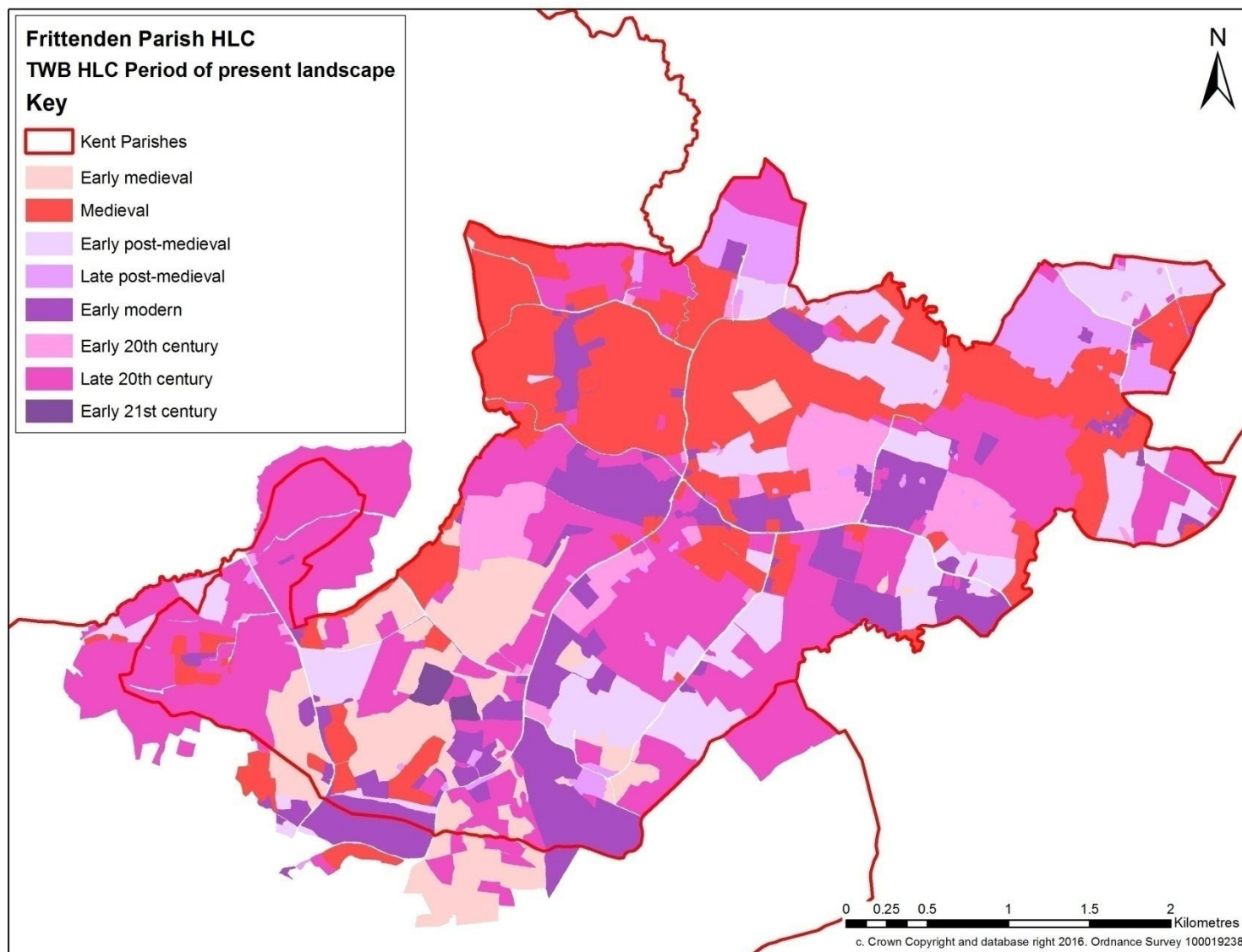


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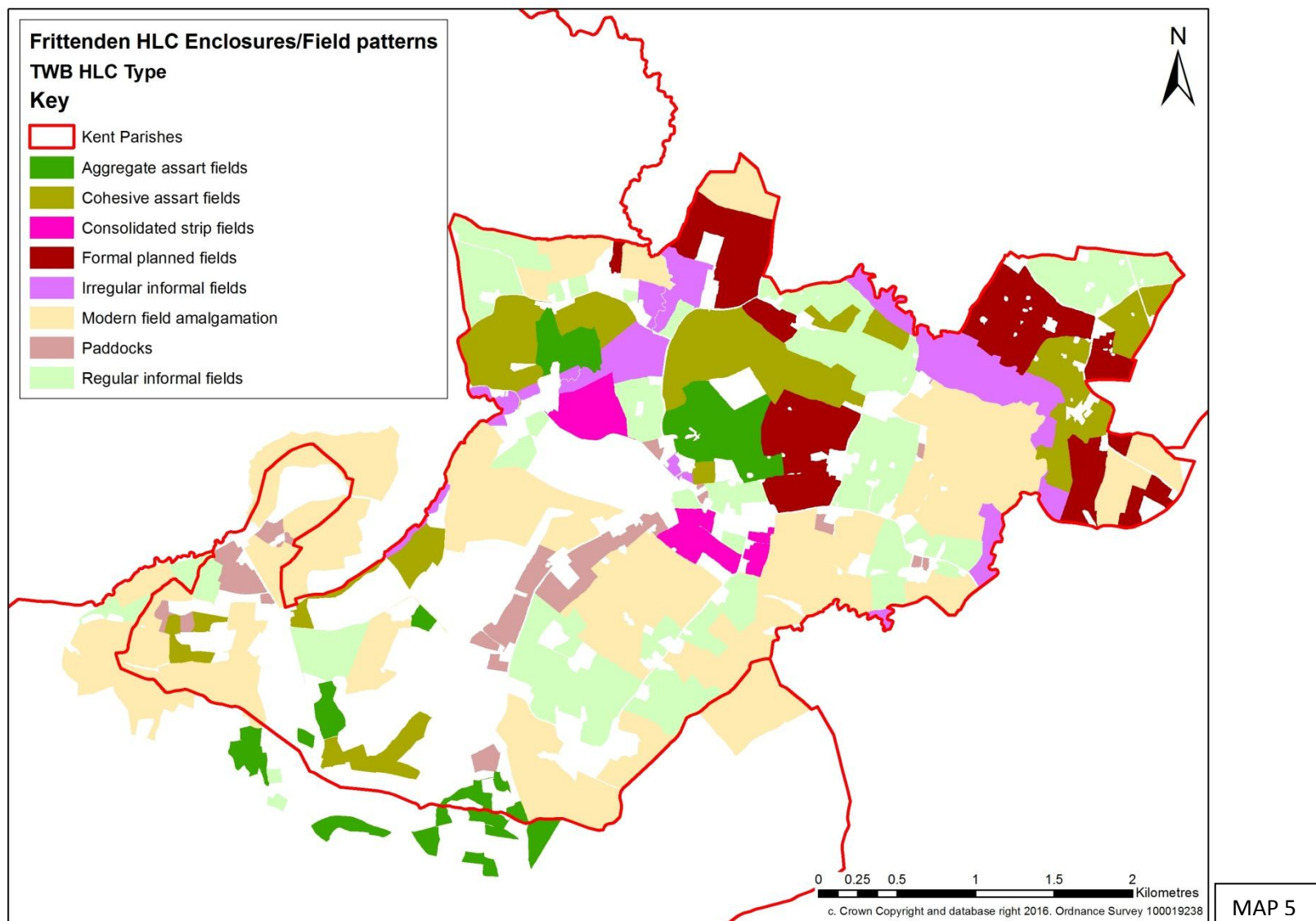
Map 3

BOROUGH OF ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS
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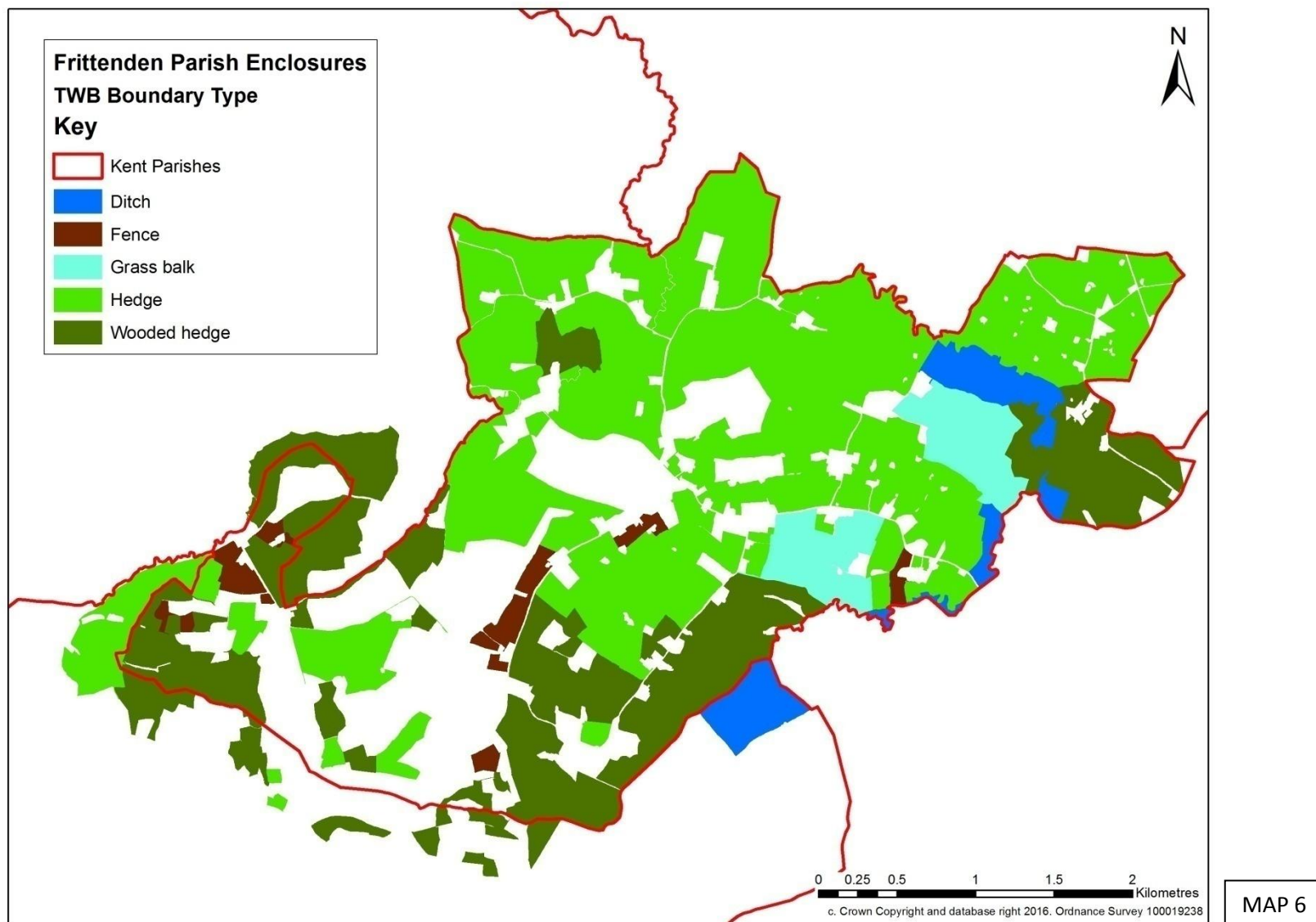


MAP 4

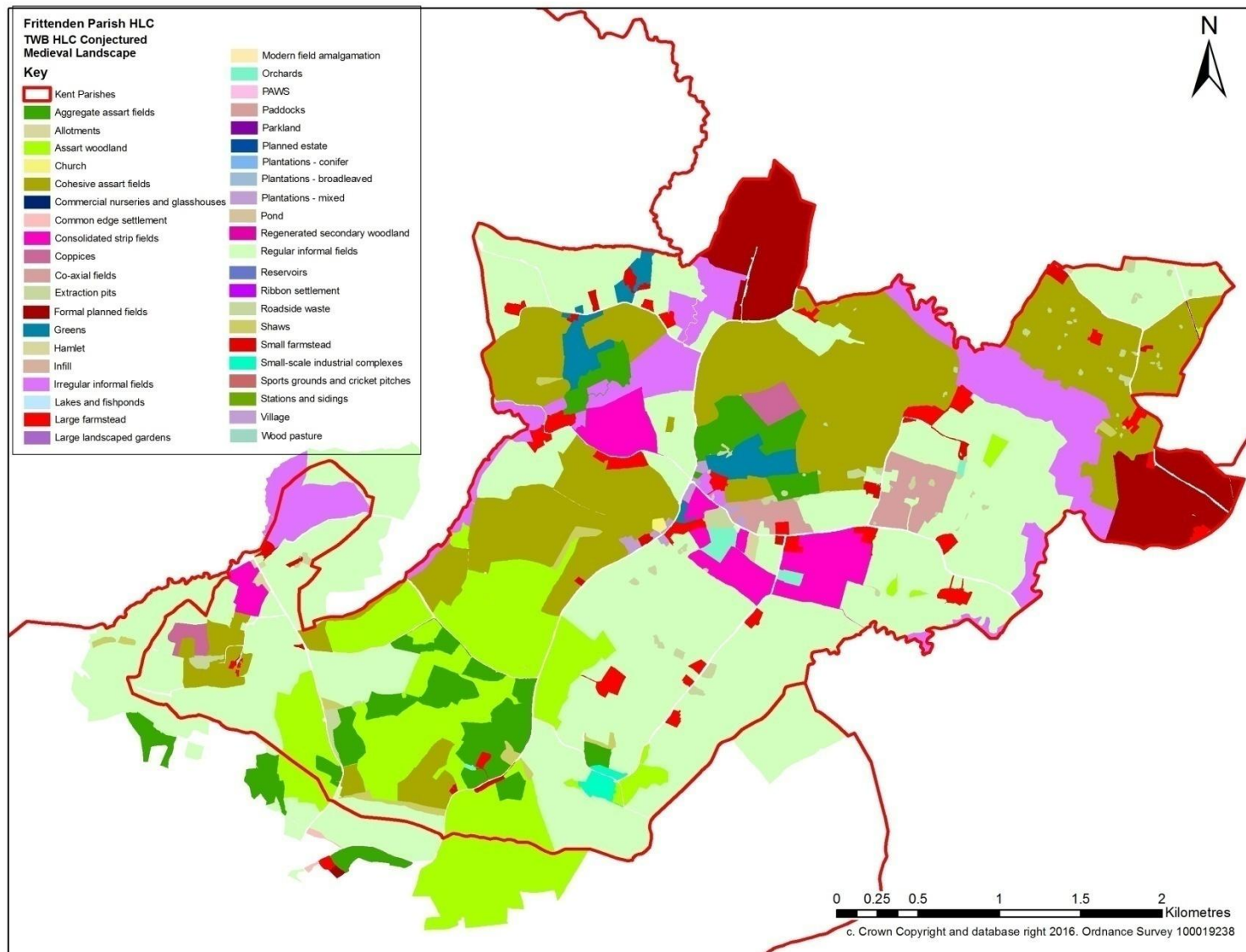
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4. Initial Conclusions

This analysis only touches on the potential of HLC to understand the historic character of the landscape and provides the starting point for research for any given area. The HLC reveals that the landscape of Frittenden is essentially a post-medieval character which is under-pinned by the medieval origins in its layout. The historic character of Frittenden reflects both the ancient landscapes (antiquity) and the modern landscapes (time-depth). The changes in the C19 and C20 with the development of modern farming techniques has left a legacy of large open type fields but the underlying structure of remaining field boundaries, old routeways (lanes and paths) and the dispersed nature of the historic settlement is still present and can be identified here. Frittenden is a parish with considerable recorded medieval history, which in turn can still be identified on the ground through the survival of historic landscape features. The fragmented field patterns which still survive are evidence of how the landscape was farmed in the medieval and early post-medieval periods. The Romano-British evidence suggests that the landscape at Frittenden was utilised and exploited at this time. Crop marks on the aerial photos show the survival of below ground features associated with earlier field systems.

Far more research is needed to understand the different process of enclosure in the Weald of Kent, especially in the understanding the medieval settlement and expansion. Further research is needed on the division of land with their farmsteads into yokes, yardlands, sulungs, virgates etc. and interpreting medieval manorial surveys with the actual territories in the landscape.

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