



English Maelor 13b

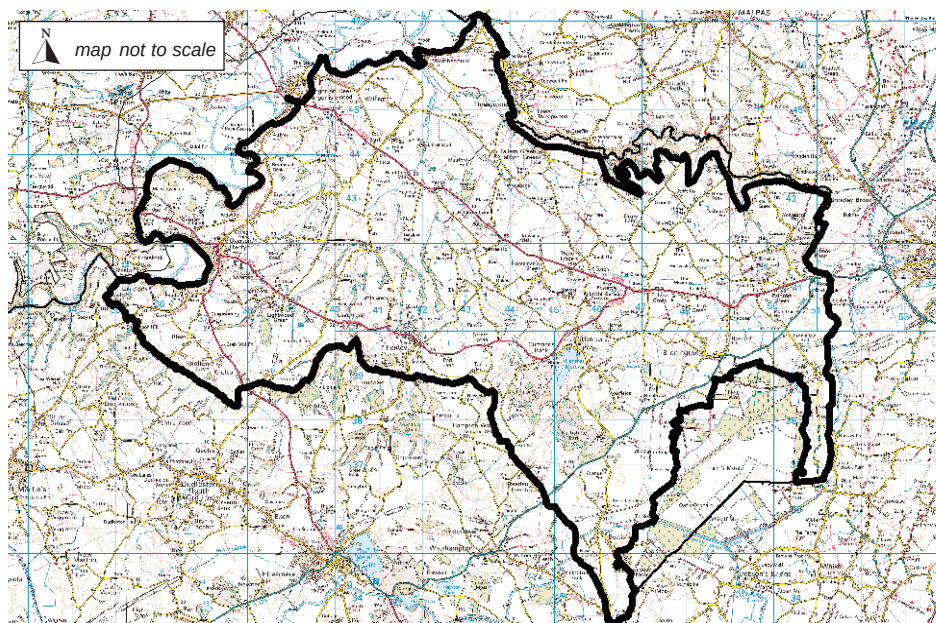
This is one of a series of Local Planning Guidance Notes based on Wrexham LANDMAP (adopted November 2004), setting out recommendations for each Landscape Character area.

An area of undulating lowland farmland and small villages which retains evidence of historic landscapes and of alternating English and Welsh influence

Landscape context

This area is similar to the Cheshire and North Shropshire Plain beyond the Wrexham boundary, but the cultural landscape is characterised by a mixture of English and Welsh influences. The other areas within the Wrexham Agricultural Lowlands landscape type are the Welsh Maelor to the west of the River Dee and the Dee Terraces to the north

Map of English Maelor Landscape Character Area



Character Area boundaries should be considered transitional rather than precise
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English Maelor summary:

- Large character area defined by strong English influence
- Undulating, mainly pastoral lowland farmland
- Relatively tranquil rural area
- Well-managed hedges with hedgerow trees and small woodlands
- Historic designed estates with the western half being a Landscape of Special Historic Interest
- Field ponds abundant on areas with clay soils
- Historic settlement pattern with moated settlements and remnants of medieval ridge and furrow
- Patches of valuable semi natural habitats
- Current agricultural changes affecting character





Key characteristics

Visual character:

- Gently undulating lowland farmland between 10 and 100 m above sea level, with small linear woodlands along streams
- Enclosure by abundant, usually well-managed hedges and hedgerow trees, and by landform, but good views from higher ground towards western hills
- Gredington, Bettisfield, Iscoyd and Emral Parks form enclosed private areas, but estate influence is widespread
- Small rural villages

Geological character:

- Landform reflects deep deposits of materials left after the Ice Age, over Triassic sandstones
- Meres and mosses with glacial origin, including Hanmer Mere
- Soils derived from glacial till are slow draining and heavy
- Areas of glacial sands and gravels are more hummocky and dissected, such as the area around Eglwys Cross. Deep and well drained sandy loam soils are found in these areas
- Drainage is to the River Dee, via the Emral and Wych Brooks

Ecological character:

- Mainly 'improved' grassland and farmland, but with valuable hedgerows and hedgerow trees
- Abundant field ponds derived from marl pits or clay pits
- Other aquatic habitats of high value including canal, meres and streams
- Areas of parkland and wood pasture with mature and veteran

trees of high value

- Broadleaved, conifer and mixed plantation woodlands

Historical character:

- Extensive areas of medieval strip fields and ridge and furrow with associated moated sites, preserved under pasture
- Designed parkland/gardens on Cadw Register of Parks and Gardens (Bettisfield Hall Park, Gredington Park, Iscoyd Park) and others not on Register (Emral, Bryn-y-Pys)
- Settlements of medieval origin - Overton, Penley, Hanmer, Worthenbury, Bronington
- Widespread occurrence of English place names with 'green' (Tallarn Green, Horseman's Green, Lightwood Green)
- Former Ellesmere and Whitchurch railway and Shropshire Union Canal, with associated settlement at Bettisfield
- Site of Gwernheylod Banks Iron Age promontory fort near Overton



Overall management strategy:

Conservation and sustainable rural development

Management Guidance

Aims	Guidelines
Preserve and restore historic designed landscapes	● Conserve and manage character and setting of parkland associated with Gredington Park, Iscoyd Park and Bettisfield Park ● Retain and restore stone boundary walls and other built historic parkland features
Preserve local distinctiveness	● The character of rural villages and their setting are particularly sensitive to new development
Conserve landscape pattern	● Carry out replacement planting of hedgerow trees, particularly oaks and ash to ensure perpetuation of characteristic landscape ● Areas for Horsiculture are to conserve traditional field boundaries and avoid the proliferation of fences, structures and buildings within the countryside, where this would erode character
Preserve geological features	● Maintain integrity of landforms, including fluvial landforms, and assess new exposures ● Maintain morphological integrity of glacial landforms
Conserve wetland habitats	● Refer to River and Pond Habitat Action Plans and Otter Species Action Plan of Wrexham Biodiversity Action Plan
Retain, manage and expand woodland habitats	● Replace coniferous trees with native broadleaved trees in woodlands, increase diversity in woodland structure, retain old/dead standing or fallen trees, restrict grazing ● Enhance and expand wood-pastures and retain veteran trees, protect from agricultural intensification ● Maintain and develop woodland corridors. ● Enhance and extend orchards and preserve historic fruit varieties
Enhance ecological value of farmland	● Protect, manage and enhance lowland pastures, encourage cattle grazing in rush pastures ● Maintain and develop green networks, including hedgerows ● Maintain arable headlands and wide field margins ● Consider Tir Gofal agreements and cross compliance measures to enhance biodiversity
Respect historic landscape character and historic landscape features	● Preserve in situ surviving remnants of historic parklands, avoid subdivision ● No further development or groundworks on moated sites ● Evaluate archaeology in advance of development, carry out assessments to tie in field systems with villages, link sites with wider historic landscape ● Refer to Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust's Maelor Saesneg historic landscape study which includes the following recommendations: Conserve and manage: <i>historic bridges, milestones and other structures associated with road improvements in the 18th and 19th centuries</i> <i>medieval road pattern and post-medieval townscape of Overton</i> <i>defences and interior of Gwernheylod Banks Iron Age promontory fort near Bryn-y-Pys</i> <i>buried archaeological deposits associated with early settlement history of 'green' settlements at Lightwood Green, Penley and Tallarn Green</i> <i>palaeoenvironmental deposits and sediments preserved below or near late glacial meres in the Gredington, Bettisfield, Eglwys Cross areas</i> <i>structures and deposits relating to the early history of settlement at Bettisfield</i> <i>structures and building relating to the history of the canal and railway and evidence of associated rural industries</i> <i>setting, parkland, gardens, buildings and other structures associated with Iscoyd Park and Whitewell lodge, Emral, Gredington, Bettisfield</i> <i>buildings, leats, millponds and other structures associated with watermills</i>
Support cultural heritage	● Management of rural areas needs to reflect/anticipate social and agricultural change. Provide low-key record of Polish Hospital, liaise with members of Polish community and RC church ● Preserve historic character of rural villages, encourage existing local history initiatives ● Promote sustainable greenways through countryside, avoiding main roads

Cultural character

- On Welsh border with strong links to Whitchurch, Malpas and Ellesmere
- Pre-1974, a detached part of Flintshire
- Predominantly agricultural landuse, but many farmsteads undergoing conversion to residential use
- Network of footpaths and minor roads throughout the area, including Maelor Way
- Penley Polish Hospital was an adapted WW2 US army hospital, now in industrial or residential use

Landscape sensitivity

The integrity of the traditional English Maelor landscape is vulnerable to economic changes which threaten traditional farming, and to development of land use practices which do not take historical landscape features into account.

For further information contact:

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All our information is available in accessible formats



The English Maelor can be subdivided into 2 main areas:

The western part has been designated by Cadw as a Landscape of Special Historic Interest. With heavier soils, and traditional pastoral agriculture, many areas of medieval ridge and furrow, moated settlements, and other features have been preserved.

The eastern part has areas of lighter, sandy soils, and more of it is in arable cultivation. It is generally more variable in character, particularly near Fenn's Moss and Bettisfield.

These subdivisions are only general - Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust's Maelor Saesneg Study has identified a total of 17 detailed historical character areas within the same area.

