

Landscape around Laxfield [Environmental Assessment]

A leisurely bike ride around some of the outlying lanes beyond the settlement area provided an overview of the Parish. The roads covered included: -

- Bickers Hill
- Banyard's Green
- Cratfield Rd
- Part of Cake St and the leg to Chip Green
- B1117 Vicarage Rd to Cook's Corner
- Cook's Corner to Hulver Tree Farm
- On to Sunflower
- Sunflower to Low Farm
- On to Owls Green
- Dennington Rd

In simple terms, the outer parish can be described in four quadrants; North West, North East, South West and South East.

North West

- Open, generally flat, with limited tree and hedge row cover.
- Main highway is the B1117 to Stradbroke, with parallel routes to north and south.
- Good public footpath (PROW) access intersect the fields.
- Typical agricultural landscape with big sky, interrupted by power lines and a few private wind turbines.

North East

- The hamlet of Banyard's Green defines a large part of this area resulting in more varied skylines.
- A criss-cross of roads leading to outlying villages and some useful PROWs.
- Short hills on roads leading south to the village centre and east to Ubbeston, indicate the valley of the upper reaches of the Blyth.

South West

- The main road, B1117, winds up and out towards Halesworth.
- There some useful tree belts running east/west at a low level (Sewers and St. Farm Rd.) and the buildings with associated gardens and field hedges give additional cover.
- Further south the landscape opens up again to larger fields and two roads give access to Badingham and beyond via the A1120.

South East

- As you enter this quadrant from the east Laxfield Wood predominates; although truncated over the centuries and not open to public access, this wood is of environmental value.
- Beyond the woods the fields, although large, fold gently into water courses.
- The large area of agricultural land heading north is bisected by the Sheep Walk, the only public access route.

- To the west of Dennington Rd the fields are generally smaller with hedge boundaries and the protected environs of Laxfield House, together with the Racecourse field, give a more intimate feel to the landscape.
- Several PROW bisect the area.
- The parish boundary stops where the hamlet of Owl's Green in the parish of Dennington starts.

In all of the quadrants the nature of the soil and subsoil have a large effect on the field topography. The predominately heavy clay soils mean that drainage ditches intersect the landscape and bounder most fields.

Over the centuries the fields have been folded down to their edges by acts of ploughing and weathering.

Although often described as flat there is often an appreciable fall from the centre, assisted by the farming practice of installing either piped or deep ploughed (molded) land drains.

The boundary ditches can reduce the severe impact of prairie fields and, if the hedges and trees are left alongside, they provide essential pathways for wildlife.

DJA/JL

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