

A revision of the Ancient Woodland Inventory for Tonbridge & Malling borough, Kent

Report and Inventory Maps
March 2010



Project carried out by the
Weald and Downs Ancient Woodland Survey

Tonbridge & Malling Ancient Woodland Inventory revision – summary findings

Ancient woodland is a nationally important and threatened habitat, and its existence over hundreds of years has preserved irreplaceable ecological and historical features. The South East has approximately 40% of the ancient woodland in England, but this valuable resource is increasingly under threat from development pressures in this densely populated region. The Weald and Downs Ancient Woodland Survey was set up in recognition of the increasingly important role of ancient woodlands and the deficiencies of the existing Ancient Woodland Inventory.

The tables, figures and maps hereunder represent the findings of a project (running between November 2007 & March 2010) to revise the Ancient Woodland Inventory for Tonbridge & Malling borough. A full report detailing the methodology and results is in preparation. The Weald and Downs Ancient Woodland Survey has worked with Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council, the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Unit, the Forestry Commission, Natural England, and the Kent and Medway Biological Records Centre to provide a robust evidence base upon which to assign ancient woodland status. The aim of the survey, based at the High Weald AONB Unit, has been to enhance and update the Ancient Woodland Inventory, and to include, for the first time, ancient woodlands less than two hectares in size.

The whole of the borough's ancient woodland resource has been re-examined. The number of parcels of ancient woodland recorded has increased from 169 in the original inventory to 470 in the revised inventory. Most of this additional number is attributable to small parcels of woodland well distributed across the district. The area of ancient woodland in the borough since the original inventory was produced has risen from 2,560 ha to 2,621 ha, a gain of roughly 60 ha as a result of this revision. This is a net gain, representing 400 ha of newly identified area and roughly 340 ha of loss of previously designated land. This brings the portion of the borough's area designated as ancient woodland to slightly below 11%.

The revised Inventory will assist Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council's planners in making decisions about development within the district, thus ensuring that the effects of any development proposals on ancient woodlands can be properly assessed and considered. The revised inventory will also enable a better assessment of the extent and quality of Tonbridge & Malling borough's ancient woodland resource to be made, and will help identify threats to the resource, areas for improving habitat connectivity, and opportunities for the strategic management of key woodlands.

Philip Sansum

Table 1: Summary of the woodland area and number of separate woodland parcels from the National Inventory of Woodland and Trees (NIWT, Forestry Commission, 2000), the original AWI (digitized version, 2000), and the revised AWI (2010). All areas in ha.

	Area	% of the borough	Number of woodland parcels	Average area of woodland parcel
Tonbridge & Malling borough	24,098			
All woodlands (NIWT) >2 ha	3,338	13.85	227	14.70
Original AWI (woods >2ha)	2,560	10.62	169	15.15
Revised AWI (including woods <2ha)	2,621	10.88	470	5.58
Overall ancient woodland gain – compared to Original AWI (2000)	61	0.26	301	

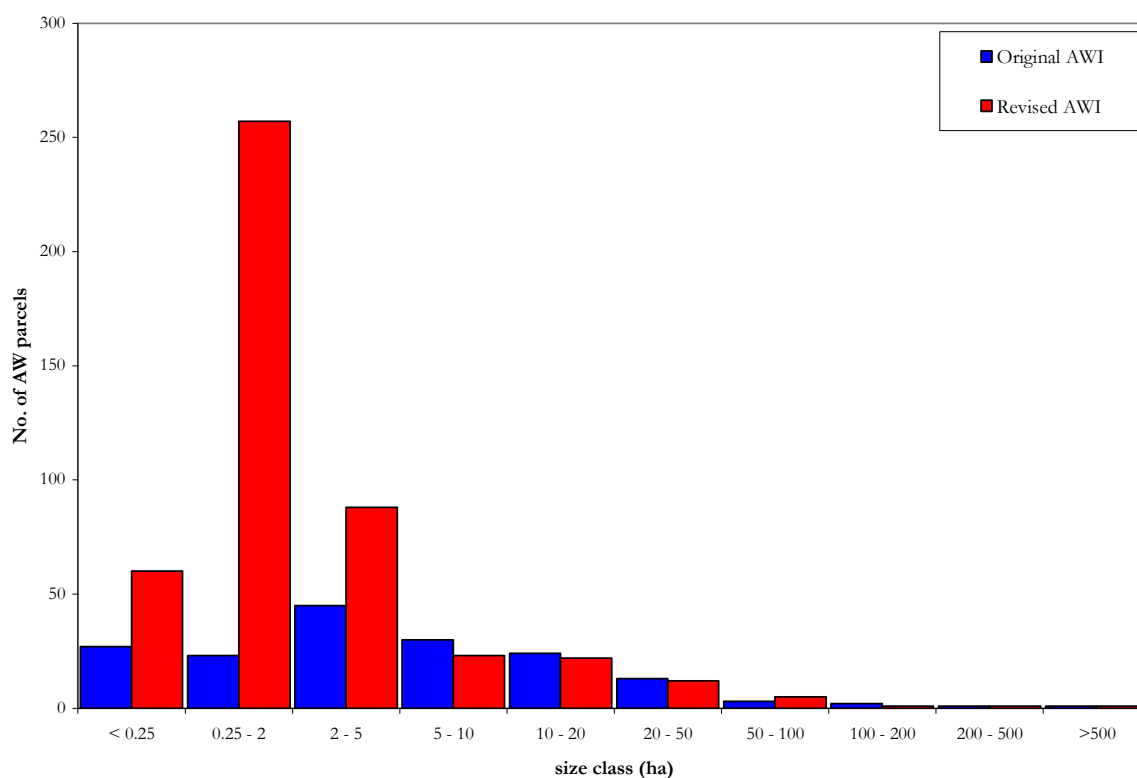
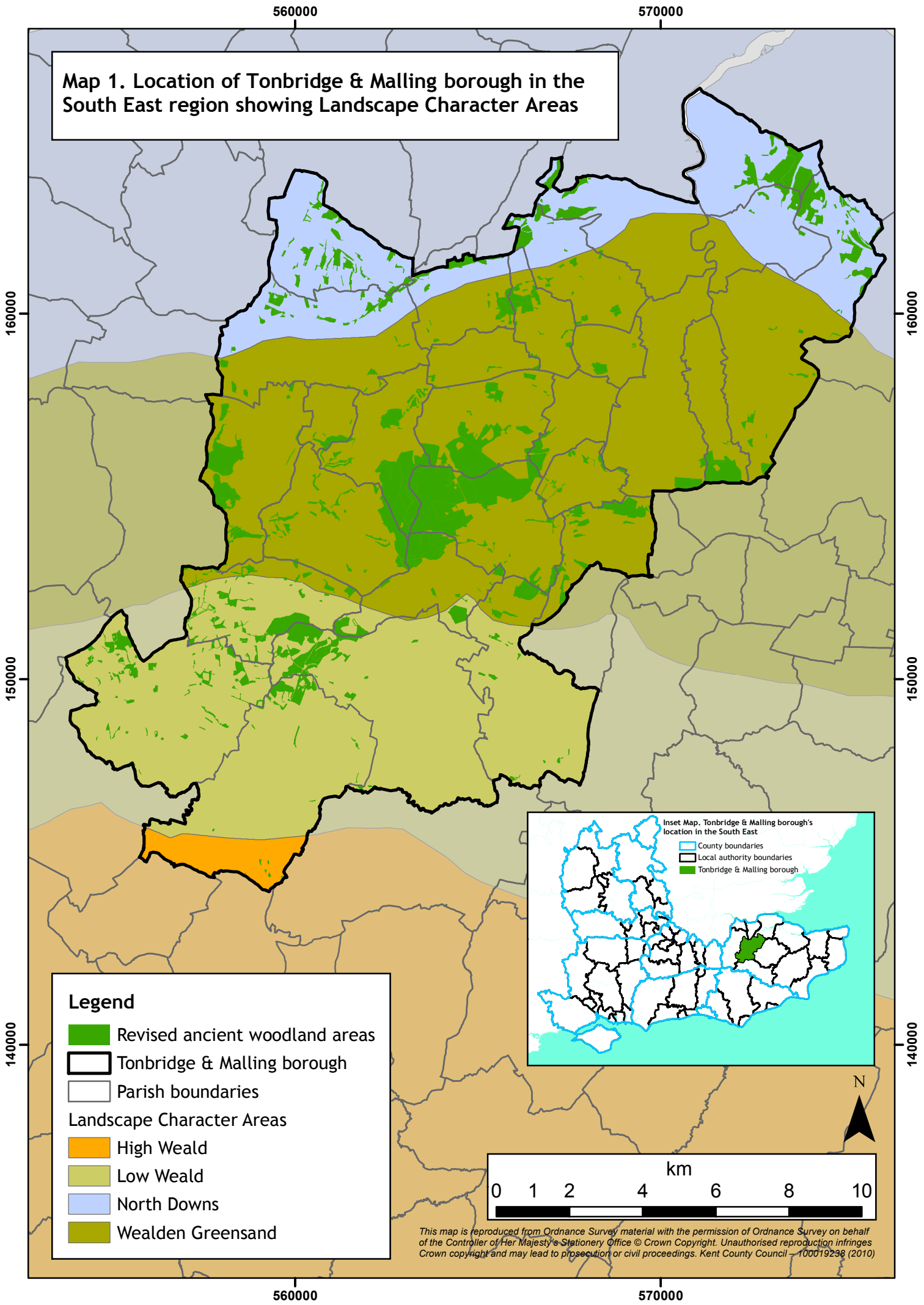


Figure 1. Histogram of the size class distribution for the original and the revised AWIs.

Table 2: Ancient woodland types (areas in hectares).

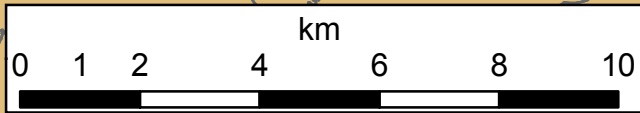
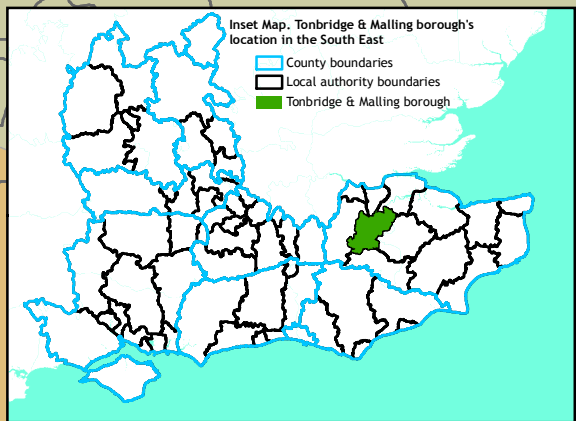
Ancient woodland type	Area (hectares)	% of ancient woodland area
Revised AWI - ASNW	2,141	78
Revised AWI - PAWS	480	22
Total:	2,061	

Map 1. Location of Tonbridge & Malling borough in the South East region showing Landscape Character Areas



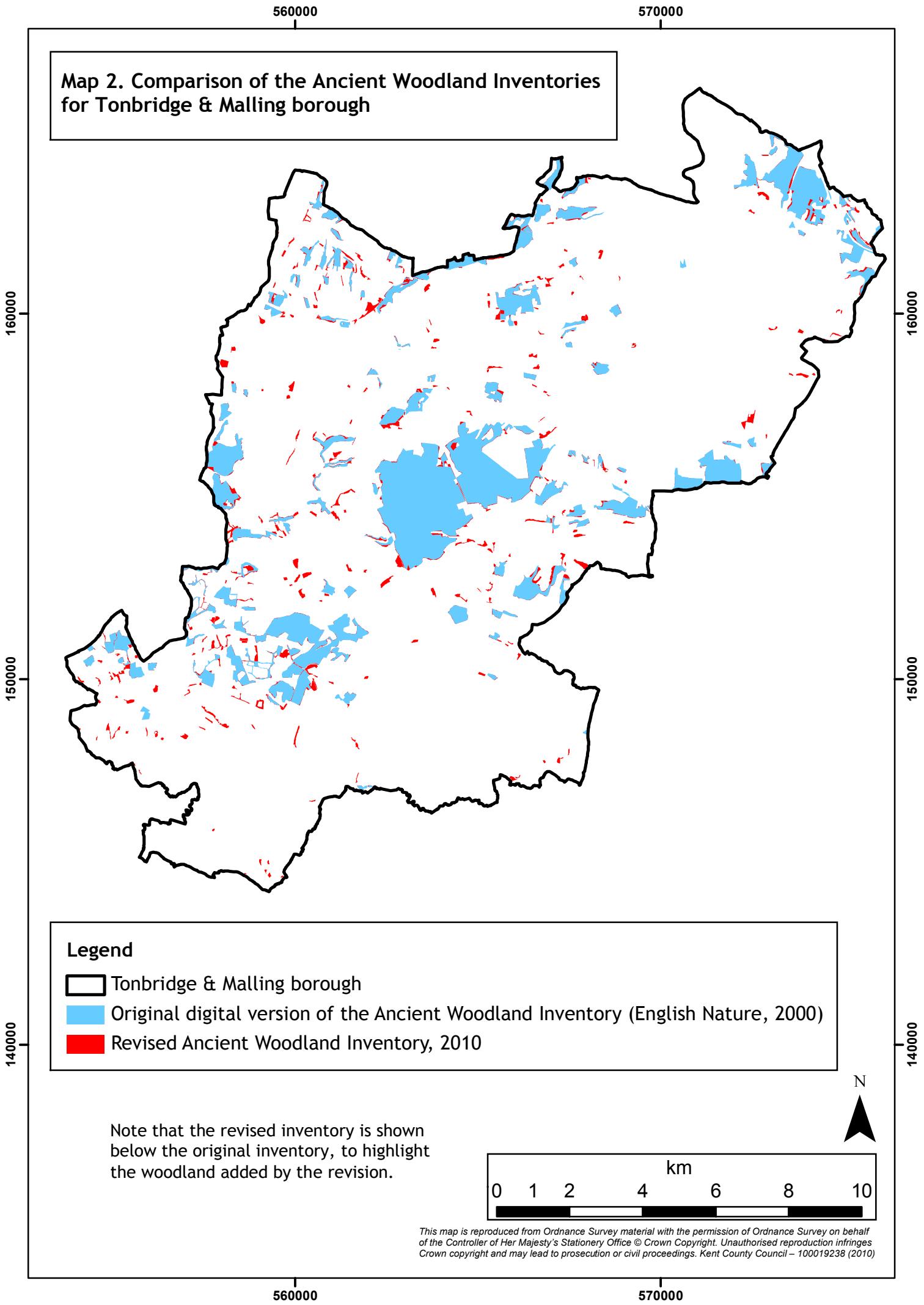
Legend

- Revised ancient woodland areas
- Tonbridge & Malling borough
- Parish boundaries
- Landscape Character Areas**
- High Weald
- Low Weald
- North Downs
- Wealden Greensand






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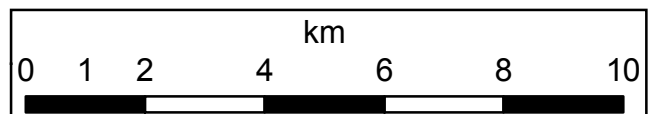
Map 2. Comparison of the Ancient Woodland Inventories for Tonbridge & Malling borough



Legend

-  Tonbridge & Malling borough
-  Original digital version of the Ancient Woodland Inventory (English Nature, 2000)
-  Revised Ancient Woodland Inventory, 2010

Note that the revised inventory is shown below the original inventory, to highlight the woodland added by the revision.



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Map 3. The revised Ancient Woodland Inventory for Tonbridge & Malling borough - overview and index sheet

Map 4

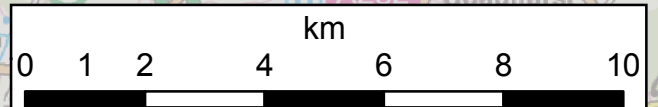
Map 5

Legend

Tonbridge & Malling borough

Ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW)

Ancient replanted woodland or Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS)



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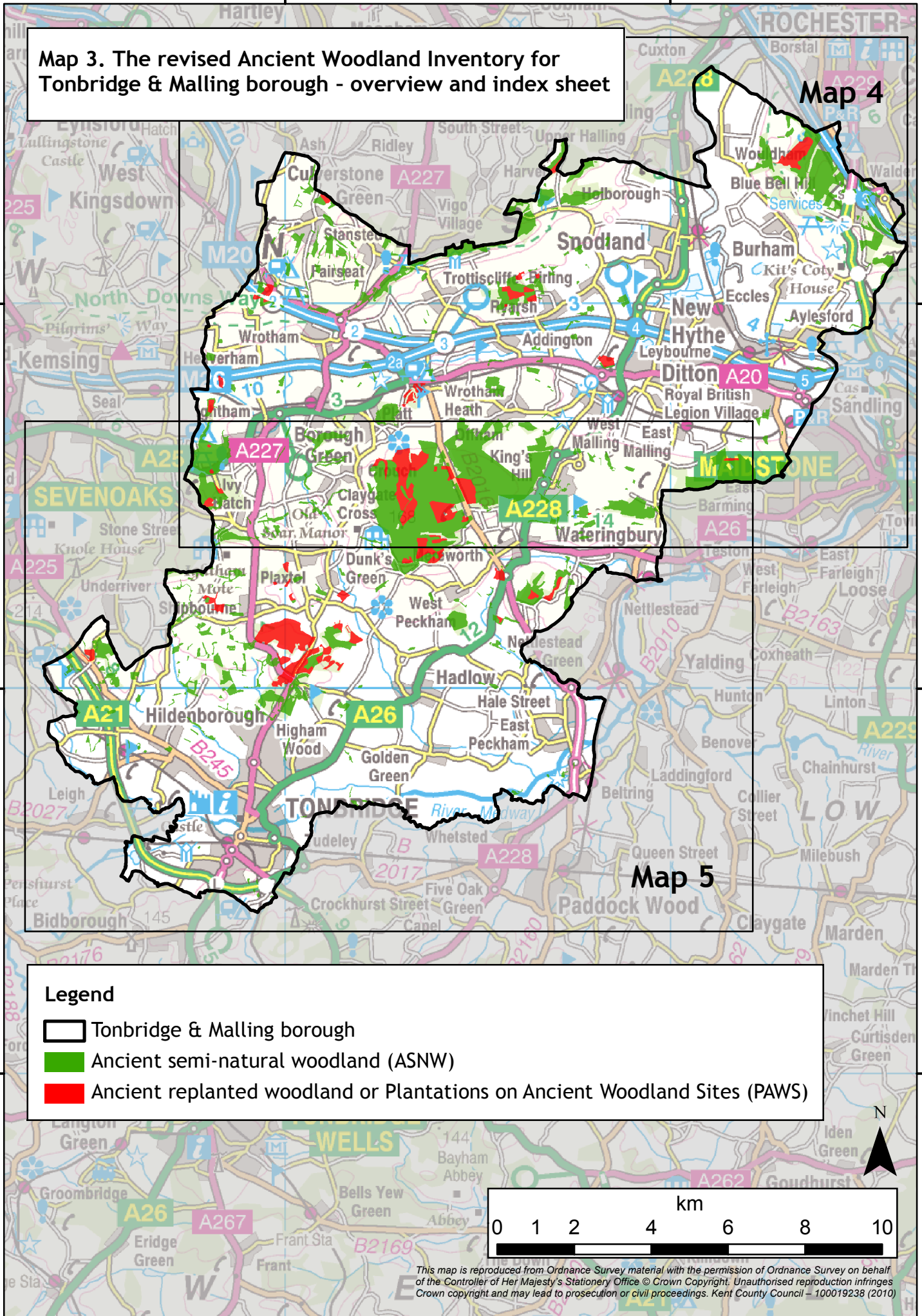
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Map 4. The revised Ancient Woodland Inventory for Tonbridge & Malling borough - North sheet

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Legend 1:50,000

-  Tonbridge & Malling borough
-  Ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW)
-  Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS)

