

Deadline 4 Submission

PART I

First may I say we are grateful for the access to Colchester Stadium for recent hearings, bearing in mind that Ardleigh and Fordham/Aldham are two areas particularly badly impacted by the pylons.

Our Parish Council Chair requested a site visit *, and we wonder whether you will come and see our lovely area – just another part of the East Anglian landscape pattern which together makes an eminently visitable part of the UK, It would be impossible to mitigate the cumulative impact of 50m pylons.

* We have just heard that the Panel had visited Aldham (see map attached, or by email) which shows their route in purple. It appears they completely bypassed Ford Street, and we wonder if they plan a further visit which will encompass the whole village?

There are many millions of visitors to the area annually, bringing in around £6bn to the local, and therefore national, economy; much of which would be lost to pylons

Fordham/Aldham/Colne & Roman River Valleys

Re: Action Point 34 Colne Valley: "Provide written response to comments made at the hearing, in particular regarding the differing characteristics of the Colne Valley ..."

It was good to note that this area was highlighted on Day 2. Bearing in mind that Waveney Valley was allotted special underground treatment (albeit later removed), NG completely failed to answer whether they had adequately assessed similar Colne Valley cumulative effects, with regard to its topography in a special landscape, cumulative heritage assets and Colchester blue/green status.

May I draw your attention to a National Grid (NG) quote from its own documentation, which I submitted as part of my Consultation Response document to NG in 2022 under:

Main Risks, constraints and opportunities ... "It is possible that multiple significant adverse effects would arise as a result of change to setting of listed buildings between Aldham and Little Tey from an OHL. Normal routeing and siting practices can be expected to afford some mitigation potentially along with additional reinforcement of planting to strengthen screening, though some consent risk to an overhead line solution may remain that may warrant consideration of further measures."

It would appear these 'further measures' were not investigated.

Mature deciduous trees are rarely taller than 25-40meters, so in such flat lands as East Anglia mitigation is mostly impossible. Aldham church spire is 30m high, yet is currently still visible even though surrounded by several very old mature trees and woodland in and around the village.

As can be seen from the Natural England map of their Priority Habitat Inventory (attached, or to follow on email) of the Aldham area, there are several Habitats which must be avoided:

Ancient Woodlands

Hoe Wood (Woodland Trust)

Church House Wood, and probable other small area, part of Church House Farm

Chippetts Farm

Priority Habitat, Traditional Orchard – Crapes Farm

This is a unique, 15 acre, traditional orchard with some trees planted as long ago as 1922, by the present owner's

██████████. It specialises in heritage fruit, and lesser-known varieties of: apples, medlars, cherries, quince and plums.

With unchanged land-use over such a long period, it has also become a haven for much wildlife, including newts, slow worms and grass snakes.

Priority Habitats, Deciduous Woodland:

Wick Farm

Along the River Colne at Ford Street

Ashington Lodge, Ashington Grove

Rye House

Old Rectory and beyond its northern boundary

Headborough – 6-acre deciduous woodland planted in 1989

This is a small rural village, surrounded by woods and farmland. According to Historic England, the National Heritage List for England (NHLE) names 34 Listed Buildings in Aldham [see map, or by email], and Ford Street is a Conservation Area.

These listed buildings range from as early as the original church site, 1210 through a barn from 1610 (and many other protected barns and cart lodges) houses from 1629 and earlier, up to the present day. Aldham, near the Essex/Suffolk border, is in a tranquil part of the wider tourist area of East Anglia. The increased 'industrialisation' of the countryside would have a seriously detrimental impact not only on people's enjoyment of it, but on house prices, and on the village, its farmland, businesses and tourism.

There is a long distance footpath, the Essex Way, which runs through Aldham, with paths leading off to the large network of footpaths in the village, which are well used by residents and visitors alike. The construction of giant pylons would be a serious deterrent to their use.

There is also a potential risk to health. A quote from National Grid's book, on Electromagnetic Fields, notes there is "some scientific evidence suggesting a possible link between unusually high exposure to magnetic fields and childhood leukaemia. Based on this evidence, magnetic fields are classed by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as 'possibly carcinogenic'."

Holford Rules: Holford Rule 3 states that the most direct line must be chosen. Aldham is a flat area, and it would seem that the Holford Rules (e.g.4 & 5, avoiding ridge lines) would be difficult to apply in hiding pylons. In order to avoid affecting the settings of the large quantity of above-mentioned listed buildings, and the Natural England Priority Habitat Inventory areas within Aldham (see above), it would appear to be impossible not to infringe Rule 3, above, because there would, I suggest, have to be too many Angle Towers, thus contravening Holford Rule 2. It would seem that best practice could not be observed.

This is one of the fastest housing growth areas in the country, with the need for everyone to be able to enjoy their heritage and unspoiled open spaces only increasing in importance.

Aldham Ecology and Biodiversity

Landowners have been planting trees, copses and woodland in large numbers, some with government schemes, for decades. Diseased elms have been replaced since the 1970s. Hedgerows have been replanted by farmers and landowners to replace those which were taken out in the 1960s and 1970s.. No mitigation would be acceptable, nor would it work.

Wildflower meadows have been carefully established over many years, and through Stewardship schemes wildflower strips surrounding crops, providing for ground-nesting birds; and bees and other insects. All this, and tending new trees represents a lifetime's work.

The wildlife is severely depleted over the last 50yrs, so it would not take much to tip many more onto the various Endangered Species lists. Of particular interest on the River Colne, and in its surrounding water meadows (a habitat-type which is becoming rarer thanks to cavalier house-building) are water voles, and little egrets. Government Stewardship Schemes, maintained over years, are protecting great crested newts. There are badgers, foxes, polecats, stoats, hedgehogs, bats and three species of deer in the Aldham area.

Many farmland and other birds are sadly no longer seen around Aldham. Some that are now on the Red List: skylarks, house sparrows and starlings, all nest around the village, the skylarks particularly in the fields between Tey Road, Brook Road and Rectory Road. These ground-nesting birds would be in severe danger from pylon construction.

More Government Stewardship schemes locally, have helped to re-establish barn owl habitats, directly around the proposed route. Declining tawny and little owls would also be further disturbed.

Part II - Deadline 4 Submission - some further comments, reference ISH2

It is well-known that the disturbance of the ground caused by construction work causes severe damage to the soil-structure, whether by compaction from heavy vehicles, or churning of the soil due to digging, thus destroying habitats. All of this can also restrict successful regrowth, & change the water flow patterns. HVDC undergrounding would cause less of this.

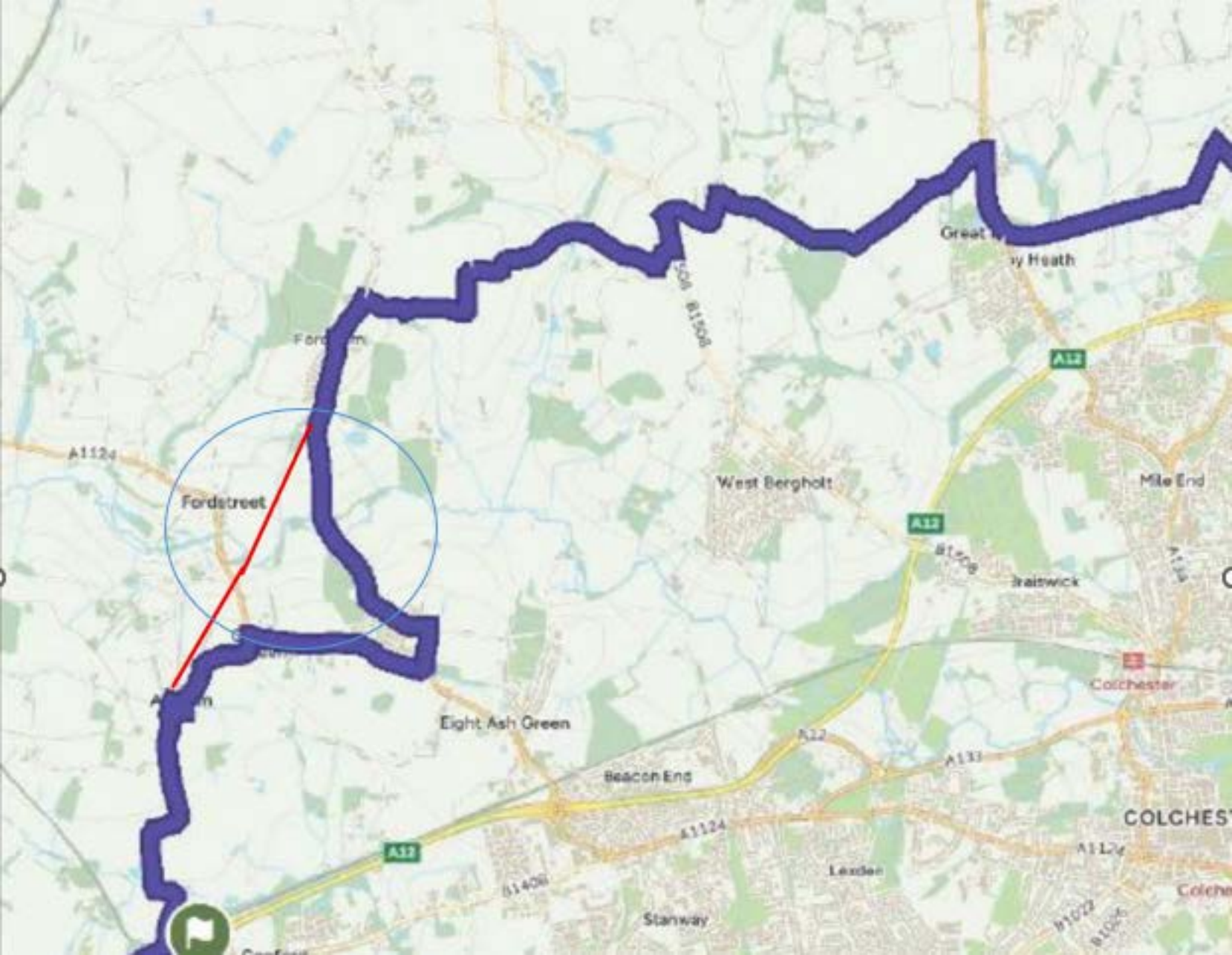
In response to an item on Radio Norfolk/ Rayo, 7 May, NG said that they have received "more than 20,000 pieces of feedback during three years of public consultation" and "that "every submission has been read and considered as we understand this is a significant proposal for many people and could be a source of concern and uncertainty". I would like to respond to this patronising statement that they may, or not "consider" the feedback, but it is far from clear that they act on it.

We have heard continuously over the years, and during the examination, of countless people continuing to be ignored after many, many attempts; not to mention the big picture with NG persistently ignoring alternatives like HVDC

The [REDACTED] narrative from Mr Harris is scarcely believable: that there will be no risk to planes from OHLs close to aerodromes, because if "if they cannot operate safely, they will have to close down".

There was much repetition from the Applicant's landscape "expert" about how lattice pylons "disappear at distance". This is simply incorrect.

When NG have so often fallen short in their dealings with us across the board, over four years, you can understand why, when we hear from Mr Harris, KC, that we should trust National Grid's "professionalism", we are not minded to do so. Similarly when we are told that NG are using their "credible, professional, judgement". Their what? [END]



Map layers

- Monuments
- Events
- Scheduled Monuments
- Listed Buildings
- Conservation Areas
- Registered Parks and Gardens
- Local List

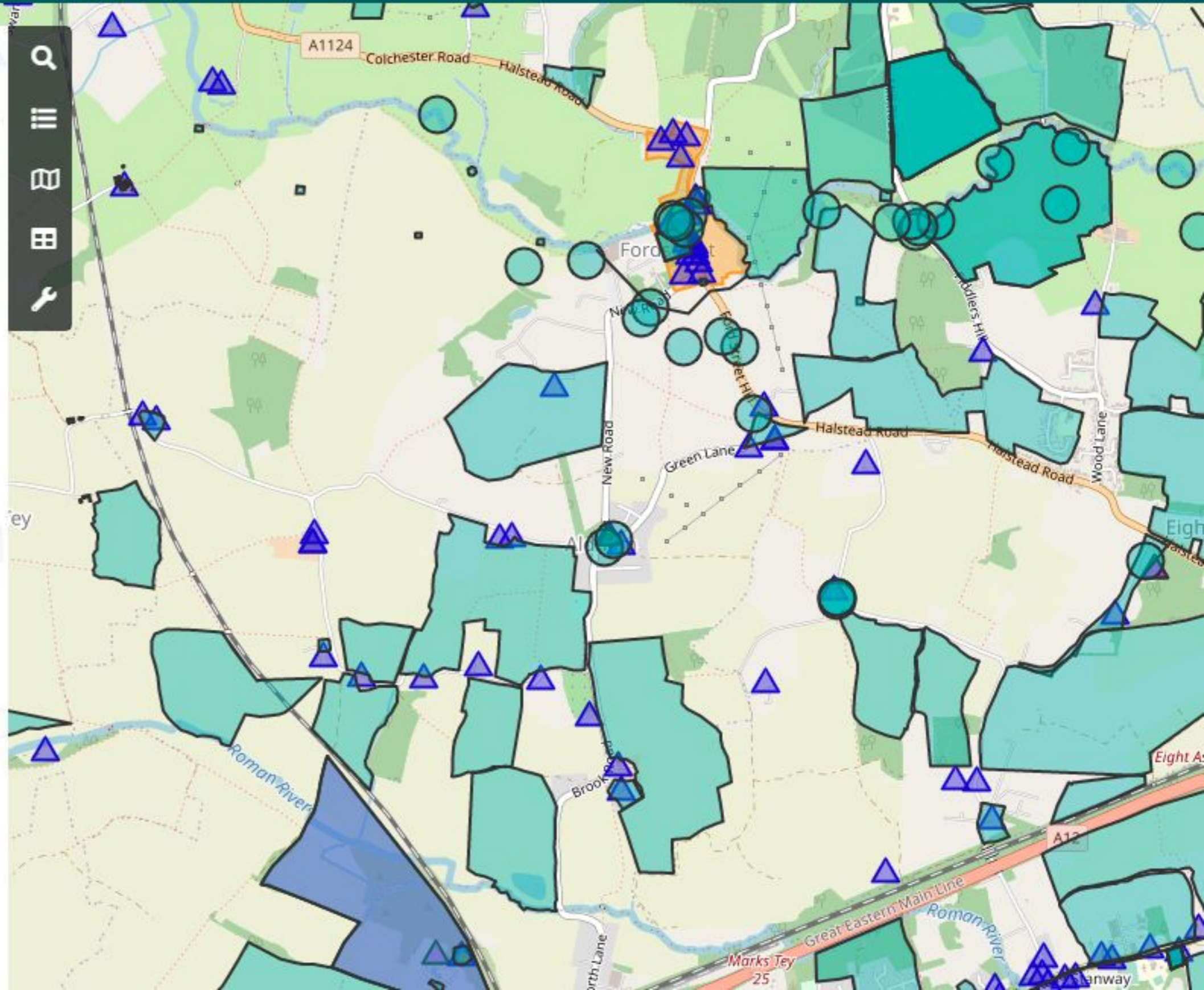


Table of Contents

- + Living England Habitat Map (i)
- + Coastal
- + Grassland
- + Heathland
- + Inland Rock
- + Marine
- + Wetland
- Woodland
 - Ancient Woodland (England) (i)
 - Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland
 - Ancient Replanted Woodland
 - Priority Habitat Inventory - Deciduous Woodland (England) (i)
 - Forestry Commission Legal Boundary (England) (i)
 - National Forest Inventory (GB) (i)
 - Priority Habitat Inventory - Traditional Orchards (England) (i)
 - Woodpasture and Parkland BAP Priority Habitat (England) (i)

