

Regional Metro Services to the West Country

The Purpose, Background and Method

This is one of a series of articles which describes the services to be provided on classic routes, when their corresponding HS routes have been brought into operation. The series XXX Service Plans also does this, but there each article is focused on a particular classic route, giving detailed service plans exactly corresponding to those of the corresponding HS route. It is the piecemeal development of the HS route, opening by discrete stages, which determines when the service plans, of both HS and classic routes, are changed. Detailed specimen timetables may also be defined.

In the present series, the focus is on a particular region, and describes the services on the various classic routes serving that region. The focus is on interconnections, rather than timetables, emphasising the network aspects. Those High Speed services which serve that particular region are also included.

The express services of the future will be provided by the HS network (of course!) equally importantly offering very high capacity. The services on the classic network are of two types, Classic-Compatible and Regional Metro. Classic-Compatible services are HS trains for most of their journey, when traveling on a HS route, but travel on a classic route (at rather lower speed) for the rest of the journey. The idea is to provide HS services for important locations off the HS route, typically at the ‘country end’ of a HS route serving London.

Regional Metro (RM) trains are either semi-fast or stopping. All are regular interval services, generally twice per hour, every train having the same stopping pattern. The semi-fasts stop at all significant locations, cities, towns, larger villages and parkway stations, and making connections into and out of HS services at all relevant interchange points (the connections being cross-platform wherever this is practicable). The semi-fast services can cover quite long distances, but the expected and intended usage is that individual passengers travel only part of the way with them, possibly switching to HS for the remainder. It is expected to be unusual for passengers to travel the whole route of a RM semi-fast service, except, perhaps, for pleasure, or, (as many people do,) to avoid changing trains when accompanied by luggage.

Regional Metro Stopping (RMS) services serve all the stations along a particular section of route, connecting into or out of the accompanying RM service (and possibly HS also) at one or both ends of the section, as appropriate.

Larger urban areas may also be served by urban metros. These offer high frequency, all stations services (usually, but certain services may have a non-stop component). These will certainly interact with RM services at the boundary stations of the (urban) metro, and usually at important city centre stations also.

The present article describes services in the West Country, consisting, for the present purposes, of Cornwall, Devon, Somerset and Dorset west of Dorchester. Within that area are two urban metros based on Plymouth and Exeter (South Devon), and articles on these have been produced, which contain further, relevant information.

Maps are included, of all the services within the West Country, and, to a smaller scale with correspondingly less detail, of all the direct services to the West Country from other regions. (The custom colour used for the West Country services, light mauve, has R/G/B values 192/96/192.)

Cornish Services

Cornwall's services are quickly described. The county is served by the CC service from Paddington, high speed to Plymouth, where it splits to serve the classic route to Penzance, and the restored route to Padstow via Tavistock, Launceston and Wadebridge.:

- 2tphC (HS4) Paddington – Old Oak Common – LHR Interchange – Bristol Parkway HS – Bristol Temple Meads HS – Taunton – Exeter St. David's – Plymouth (splits/joins) –:
 1. – Liskeard – Bodmin Parkway – Lostwithiel – Par – St. Austell – Truro – Redruth – Camborne – Hayle – St. Erth – Penzance
 2. – Bere Alston – Tavistock – Launceston – Delabole – Port Isaac Rd. (bus connection to Port Isaac) – Wadebridge – Padstow

Full details are contained in the article 'HS4 Route and Service Plans'. Beyond that, RMS services make connections with the Penzance service:

- 4tphRS (Plymouth metro) – Saltash – St. Germans – Trerule Foot – Menheniot – Liskeard
- 2/4tphRS Liskeard – Coombe Junction – St. Keyne – Causeland – Sandplace – Looe
- 2/4tphRS Bodmin Parkway – Bodmin General – Boscarne Junction – Wadebridge – Padstow (operated by, or in conjunction with, the Bodmin & Wenford Railway)
- 2/4tphRS Lostwithiel – Golant – Fowey
- 2/4tphRS Par – Luxulyan – Bugle – Roche – St. Columb Rd. – Quintrel Downs – Newquay
- 2/4tphRS Truro – Perranwell – Ponsanooth – Penryn – Penmere – Falmouth Town – F. Harbour
- 2tphRS Penzance – Marazion – St. Erth (splits / joins) –:
 1. – Lelant Saltings – Lelant – Carbis Bay – St. Ives
 2. – Hayle – Gwinear Rd. – Praze – Nancegollan – Helston

and with the Padstow service:

- 4tphRS (Plymouth metro) – Bere Alston – Tavistock West – Tavistock
- 4tphRS (Plymouth metro) – Bere Alston – Calstock – Gunnislake – Chilsworthy – Latchley – Luckett – Callington
- 2tphRS Bodmin Parkway – Bodmin General – Boscarne Junction – Wadebridge – Padstow (operated by, or in conjunction with, the Bodmin & Wenford Railway)

The Plymouth Metro services to Liskeard (half of them) connect into the westbound CC service to Penzance, and (the other half) out of the eastbound one. The Penzance – St. Ives / Helston service connects out of the Westbound CC service and into the eastbound one (i.e. the Penzance-bound train makes connections **to** Helston at Hayle, and **to** St. Ives at St. Erth, and the trains **from** St. Ives and Helston make connections into the eastbound CC service at St. Erth and Hayle respectively). All the other services in the above list connect into and out of the CC service in both directions (which may well require a 4tph frequency, hence the 2/4tph designation). In all of this stuff, the interconnections are the thing.

Similarly the Plymouth Metro services to Tavistock (half of them) connect into the westbound CC service to Padstow, and (the other half) out of the eastbound one.

The Services Terminating at Plymouth

Most of the rest of the West Country services are those which terminate at Plymouth, including HS7's Newcastle – Plymouth service. All of these also serve Exeter. The RM services are:

- 2tphR Paddington – Old Oak Common – LHR Interchange – Reading – Thatcham – (*) – Pewsey – Westbury – Frome – Castle Cary – Taunton – Tiverton Parkway – Cullompton – Exeter St. David's – Dawlish – Teignmouth – Newton Abbot – Totnes – Brent – Ivybridge – Plymouth
- 2tphR York – Micklefield – Leeds City – Wakefield Westgate – Rotherham – South Yorkshire (Meadowhall) – Sheffield Midland – Chesterfield – Derby – Burton on Trent – Tamworth – Birmingham New St. – University – Bromsgrove – Droitwich Spa – Worcester Shrub Hill – Ashchurch – Cheltenham Spa – Gloucester (reverse) – Bristol Parkway – Bristol Temple Meads – Weston Super Mare – Highbridge – Bridgwater – Taunton – Tiverton Parkway – Cullompton – Exeter St. David's – Dawlish – Teignmouth – Newton Abbot – Totnes – Brent – Ivybridge – Plymouth
- 2tphR Swansea – Neath – Port Talbot – Bridgend – Cardiff – Newport – Filton Abbey Wood – Bristol Temple Meads – Weston Super Mare – Highbridge – Bridgwater – Taunton – Tiverton Parkway – Cullompton – Exeter St. David's – Dawlish – Teignmouth – Newton Abbot – Totnes – Brent – Ivybridge – Plymouth
- 2tphR Stalybridge – Ashton-under-Lyne – Manchester Victoris – Salford Central – Eccles – Warrington Bank Quay – Helsby – Chester – Wrexham General – Ruabon – Chirk – Gobowen – Shrewsbury – Church Stretton – Craven Arms – Ludlow – Leominster – Hereford – Abergavenny – Pontypool & New Inn – Cwmbran – Newport (reverse) – Filton Abbey Wood – Bristol Temple Meads – Weston Super Mare – Highbridge – Bridgwater – Taunton – Tiverton Parkway – Cullompton – Exeter St. David's – Dawlish – Teignmouth – Newton Abbot – Totnes – Brent – Ivybridge – Plymouth
- 2tphR Paddington – Old Oak Common – LHR Interchange – Reading – Basingstoke – Salisbury – Tisbury – Gillingham – Templecombe – Yeovil Junction – Crewkerne – Chard Parkway – Axminster – Seaton Junction – Honiton – Exeter Central – Exeter St. David's – Crediton – Okehampton – Tavistock – Bere Alston – Plymouth
- 2tphR Brighton – Hove – Shoreham-by-Sea – Worthing – Chichester – Havant – Fareham – Southampton – Romsey – Salisbury – Tisbury – Gillingham – Templecombe – Yeovil Junction – Crewkerne – Chard Parkway – Axminster – Seaton Junction – Honiton – Exeter Central – Exeter St. David's – Crediton – Okehampton – Tavistock – Bere Alston – Plymouth
- 2tphR Cleethorpes – Grimsby Town – Barnetby – Market Rasen – Lincoln – Newark Castle – Nottingham – East Midlands Parkway – Loughborough – Leicester – Market Harborough – Kettering – Wellingborough – Bedford Midland – Bletchley – Winslow – Calvert – Bicester Village – Oxford Parkway – Oxford – Wantage Rd. Swindon – Royal Wootton Bassett – Chippenham – Melksham – Holt Junction – Trowbridge – Westbury – Frome – Castle Cary – Yeovil Pen Mill – Yeovil Junction – Crewkerne – Chard Parkway – Axminster – Seaton Junction – Honiton – Exeter Central – Exeter St. David's – Crediton – Okehampton – Tavistock – Bere Alston – Plymouth
- 2tphR Norwich – Wymondham – Thetford – Ely – Cambridge – Sandy – Bedford St. John's – Bletchley – Winslow – Calvert – Bicester Village – Oxford Parkway – Oxford – Wantage Rd. Swindon – Royal Wootton Bassett – Chippenham – Melksham – Holt Junction – Trowbridge – Westbury – Frome – Castle Cary – Yeovil Pen Mill – Yeovil Junction – Crewkerne – Chard

Parkway – Axminster – Seaton Junction – Honiton – Exeter Central – Exeter St. David’s –
Credton – Okehampton – Tavistock – Bere Alston – Plymouth

(*) The Paddington – Plymouth via Newbury service has no stop at Newbury as it has to overtake the LHR Shuttle to Marlborough there. However, it makes a connection for Newbury at Thatcham, and from Newbury at Pewsey.

The following HS services also serve Plymouth:

- 2tphG (HS7) Newcastle – Consett – Durham (Relly Mill) – Darlington Bank Top – York – Leeds New Lane – Huddersfield – Sheffield HS – Derby – Birmingham Interchange – Worcester Shrub Hill – Cheltenham Spa – Bristol Parkway HS – Bristol Temple Meads HS – Taunton – Exeter St. David’s – Plymouth
- 2tphC (HS4) Paddington – Old Oak Common – LHR Interchange – Bristol Parkway HS – Bristol Temple Meads HS – Taunton – Exeter St. David’s – Plymouth → stations in Cornwall
- 2tphG (HS7) Exeter St. David’s – Dunsford – Moretonhampstead – Postbridge – Two Bridges (bus connection for Princetown) – Yelverton Rd. – Plymouth

That last is most unusual – a local service on a HS line. Quite simply, HS7 across Dartmoor passes through a number of locations which would otherwise have very poor transport connections. Since HS7 is not heavily loaded at the end of the route – 4tph only – such a local service can easily be accommodated. The idea is that the HS7 Newcastle – Plymouth connects into the Dartmoor local service at Exeter, and the local service connects into the HS4 Paddington – Plymouth – Penzance / Padstow service at Plymouth.

All the RM services to Plymouth via Newton Abbot connect into the Plymouth Metro at Ivybridge, and all the services via Okehampton connect into it at Tavistock and Bere Alston. The Plymouth Metro serves North Rd. station, naturally, but no formal connections are advertised there – given that the metro offers 20tph serving 5 routes, who needs them?

Refer to the article ‘The Plymouth Metro’ for full details.

Services Based on Exeter

All of the RM and HS services in the above lists serve Exeter also.

Exeter is the primary focus of the South Devon Metro, which is a less intensive affair than that in Plymouth, but of considerably greater reach, reflecting existing commuting patterns. Although its name reflects its two main foci (the second is Torbay), the South Devon Metro actually extends as far as Ilfracombe, than which it is barely possible to go further north while remaining in Devon!

The key station is Exeter St. David’s, where extensive cross-platform interchange facilities are provided. Appendix A gives the (amended) layout of the station, illustrating the contraflow arrangements around the two island platforms. The representative hourly interchange pattern is (platform numbers in parentheses):

- 00G (HS7) Newcastle – Plymouth (7)
- G (HS7) Exeter St. David’s – Plymouth (8)
- R Paddington – Plymouth via Newton Abbot (4)

- R Paddington – Plymouth via Okehampton (3)
- RS Axminster – Exeter St. David’s (0)
- 04RS Exmouth – Barnstaple Junction (1)
- RS Exmouth – Paignton (1A)
- 07R (Stalybridge –) Manchester – Plymouth via Newton Abbot (4)
- R Norwich – Plymouth via Okehampton (3)
- 12R Axminster – Ilfracombe (3)
- 15C (HS4) Paddington – Plymouth → stations in Cornwall (7)
- R York – Plymouth via Newton Abbot (4)
- R Brighton – Plymouth via Okehampton (3)
- RS Axminster – Exeter St. David’s (0)
- 20RS Exmouth – Okehampton (1)
- RS Exmouth – Paignton (1A)
- 23R Swansea – Plymouth via Newton Abbot (4)
- R Cleethorpes – Plymouth via Okehampton (3)
- 27R Axminster – Ilfracombe (3)

– repeating at 30, 34, 37, 42, 45, 50, 53 and 57 minutes past.

Note how the contraflow arrangement at Exeter St. David’s allows every service to Plymouth via Newton Abbot to have cross-platform interchange with a corresponding service to Plymouth via Okehampton, and likewise for all services from Plymouth. Further cross-platform interchange facilities are provided at Exeter Central, Crediton, Okehampton, Axminster and Newton Abbot. Refer to the article ‘The South Devon Metro’ for full details. Note in particular that every service to Plymouth via Newton Abbot makes a cross-platform connection there to all the stations in Torbay (which is exclusively a metro preserve).

The Weymouth Services

- 2tphR Waterloo – Winchester – Southampton Airport Parkway – Southampton – Brockenhurst – Bournemouth – Poole – Wareham – Dorchester South – Weymouth
- 2tphRS Bournemouth – Branksome – Parkstone – Poole – Hamworthy – Holton Heath – Wareham – Wool – Moreton – Dorchester South – Monkton & Came – Upwey – Broadwey – Radipole – Weymouth
- 2tphR Paddington – Old Oak Common – LHR Interchange – Reading – Didcot – Wantage Road – Swindon – Royal Wootton Bassett – Chippenham – Melksham – Holt Junction – Trowbridge – Westbury – Frome – Castle Cary – Yeovil Pen Mill – Dorchester West – Weymouth
- 2tphR York – Micklefield – Leeds City – Wakefield Westgate – Rotherham – South Yorkshire (Meadowhall) – Sheffield Midland – Chesterfield – Derby – East Midlands Parkway – Loughborough – Leicester – Market Harborough – Kettering – Wellingborough – Bedford Midland – Bletchley – Winslow – Calvert – Bicester Village – Oxford Parkway – Oxford –

Wantage Rd. – Swindon – Royal Wootton Bassett – Chippenham – Melksham – Holt Junction –
Trowbridge – Westbury – Frome – Castle Cary – Yeovil Pen Mill – Dorchester West – Weymouth

The representative (partial) hourly connection pattern at Bournemouth is:

00R Waterloo – Weymouth

03RS Bournemouth – Weymouth

– repeating at 30 minutes past. Thus the fast Weymouth service connects into the stopping Weymouth service, which follows it into the platform (there being only one) at Bournemouth. In the reverse direction the stopping service clears the platform before arrival of the fast service.

Representative hourly cross-platform interchange pattern at Westbury:

00R Paddington – Plymouth

R York – Weymouth

07R Cleethorpes – Plymouth
(no Connection)

15R Paddington – Weymouth

R (Avon metro service) Weston Super Mare – Westbury and return

23R Norwich – Plymouth

R Cardiff – Portsmouth Harbour

– repeating at 30, 37, 45, and 53 minutes past.

Representative hourly cross-platform interchange pattern at Holt Junction:

00R Paddington – Weymouth
(no connection)

07R Cleethorpes – Plymouth

R Paddington – Bristol via Devizes (LHR Shuttle)

15R York – Weymouth

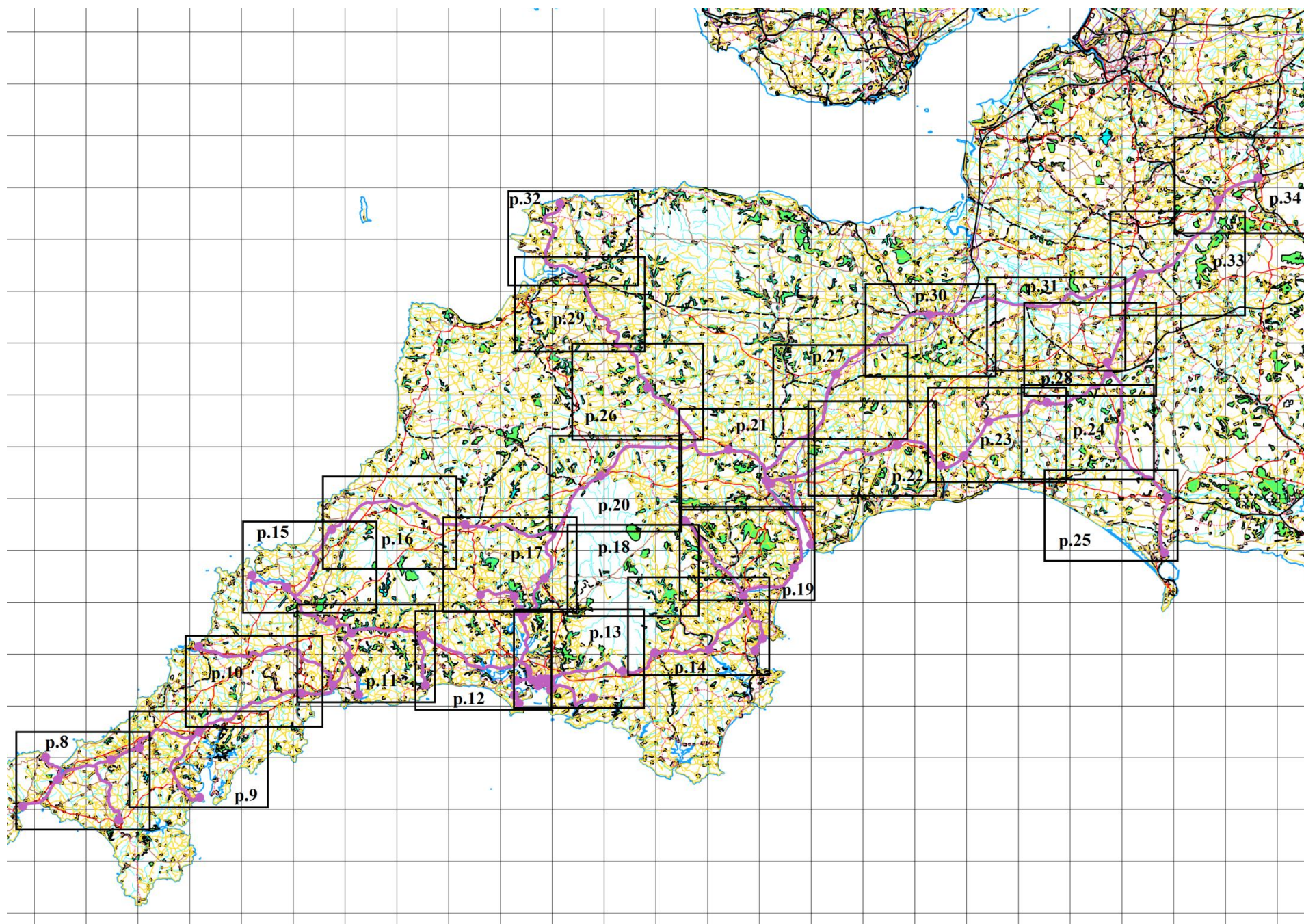
R (no connection)

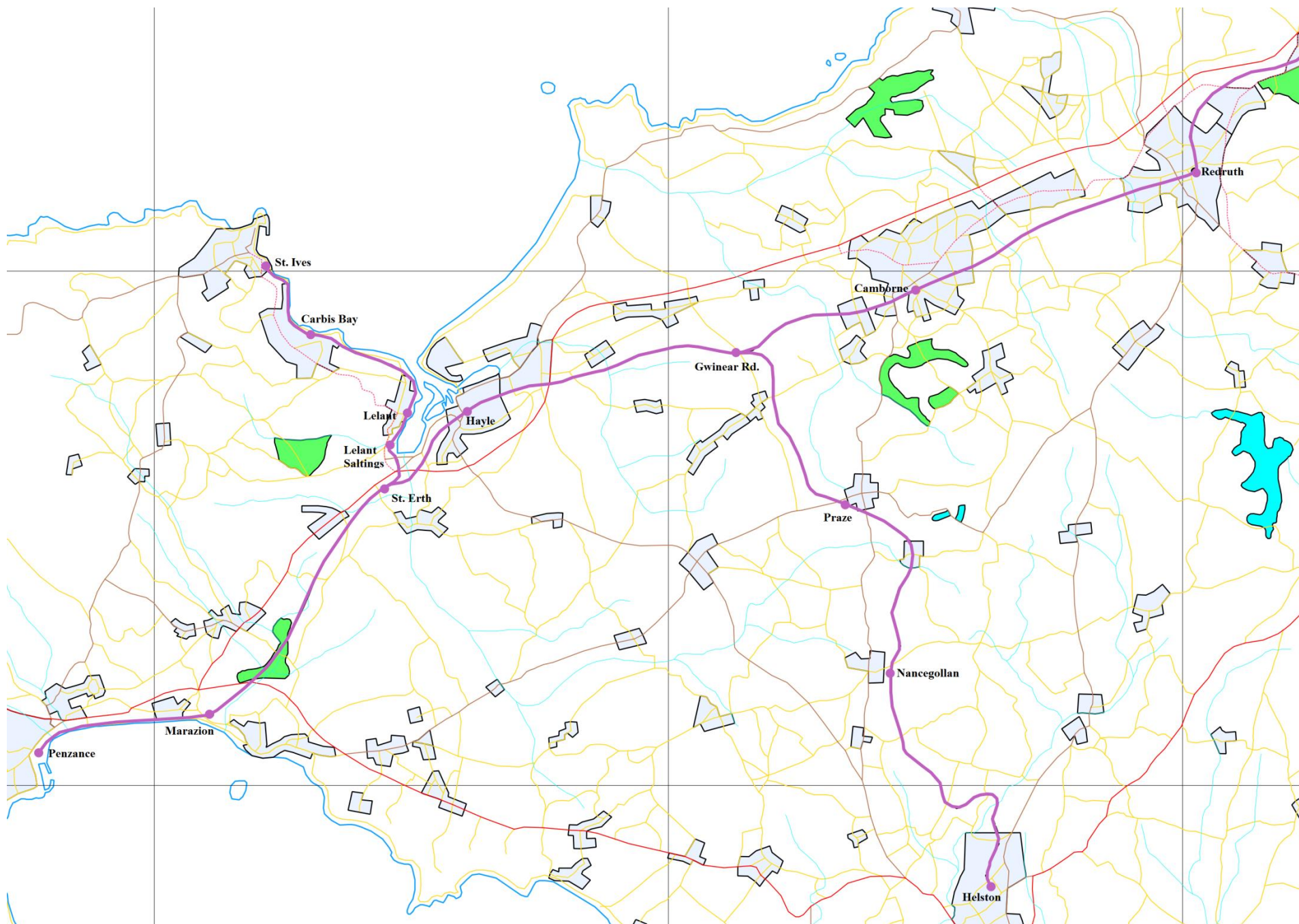
23R Norwich – Plymouth

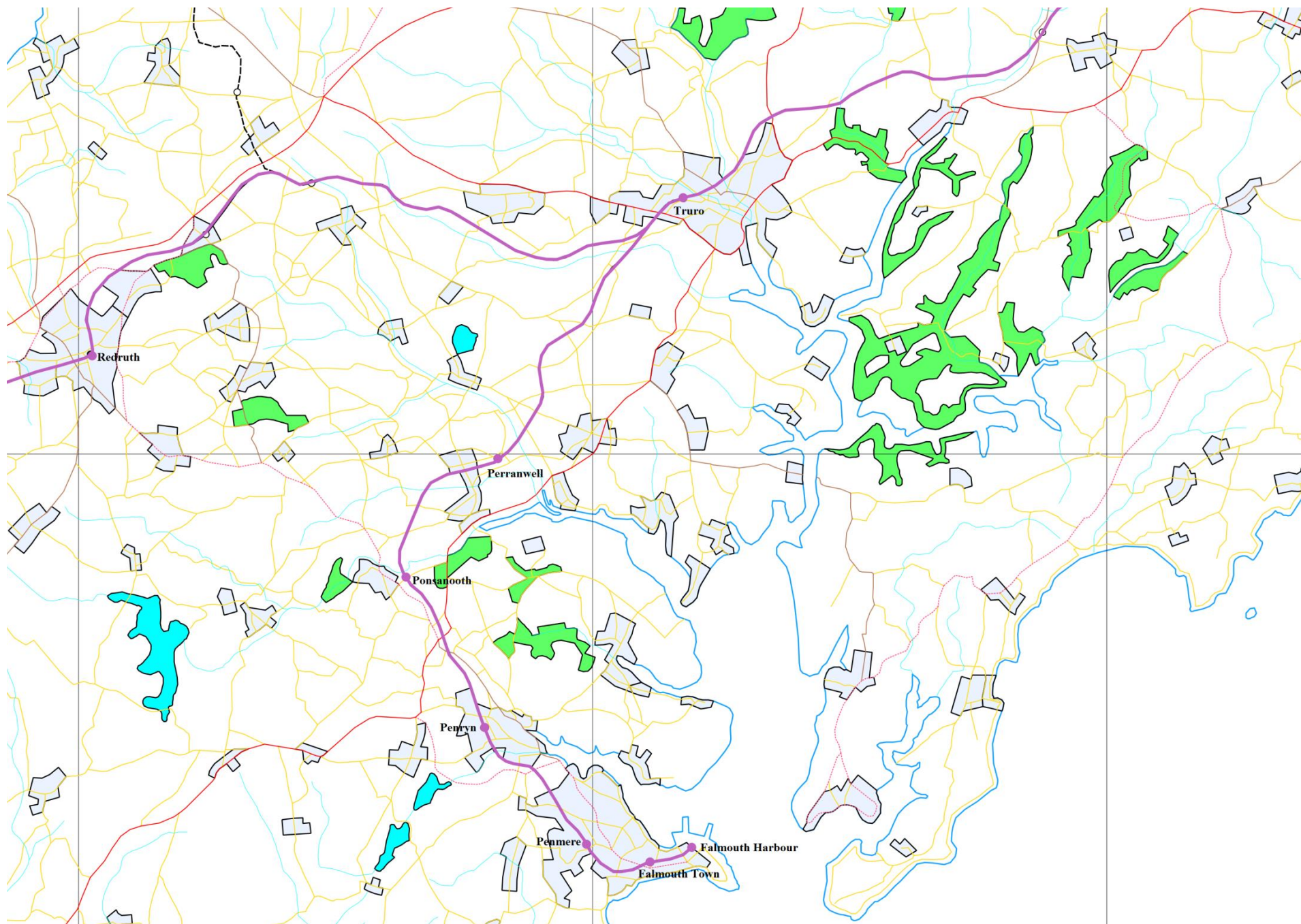
(no connection)

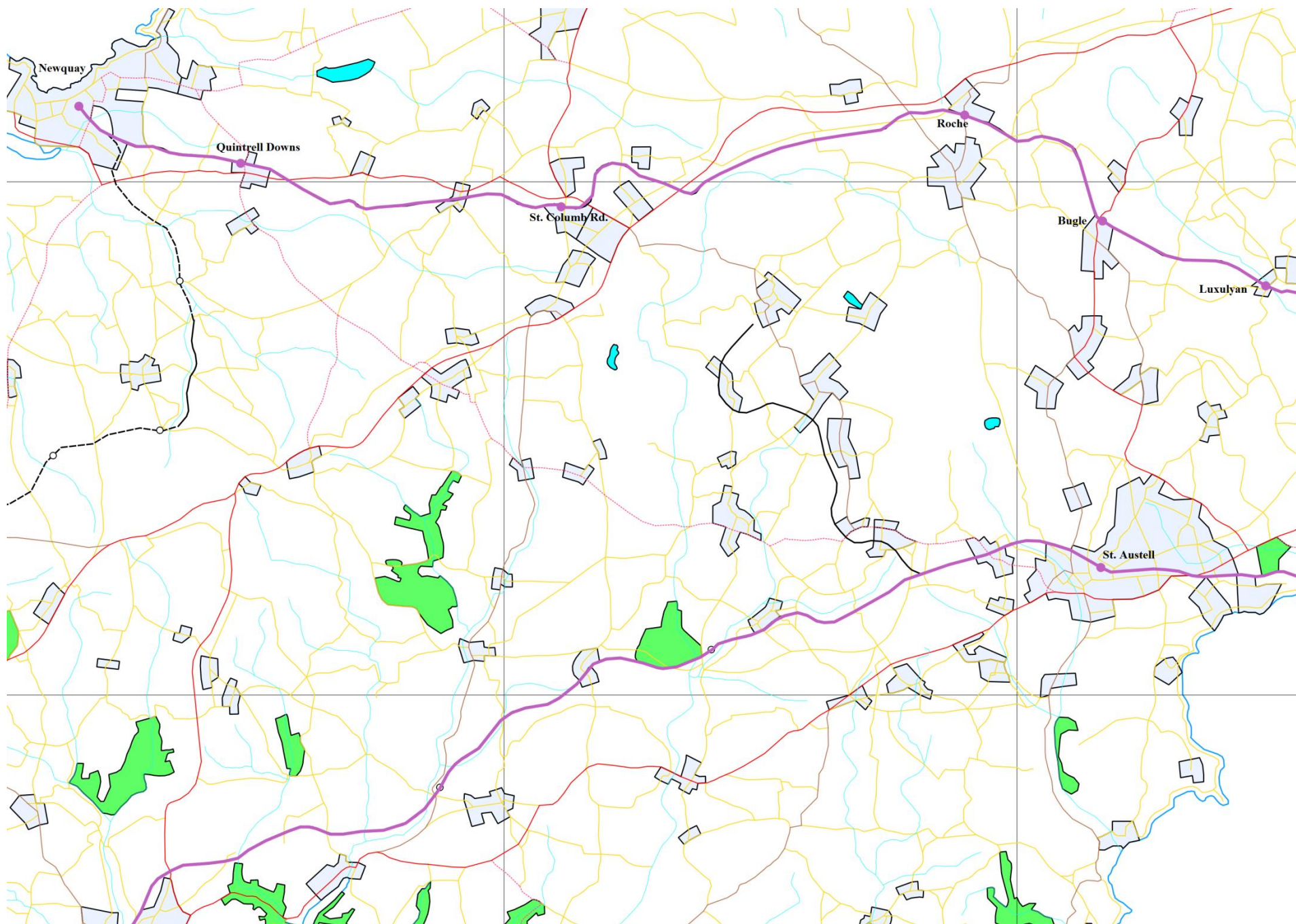
– repeating at 30, 37, 45 and 53 minutes past.

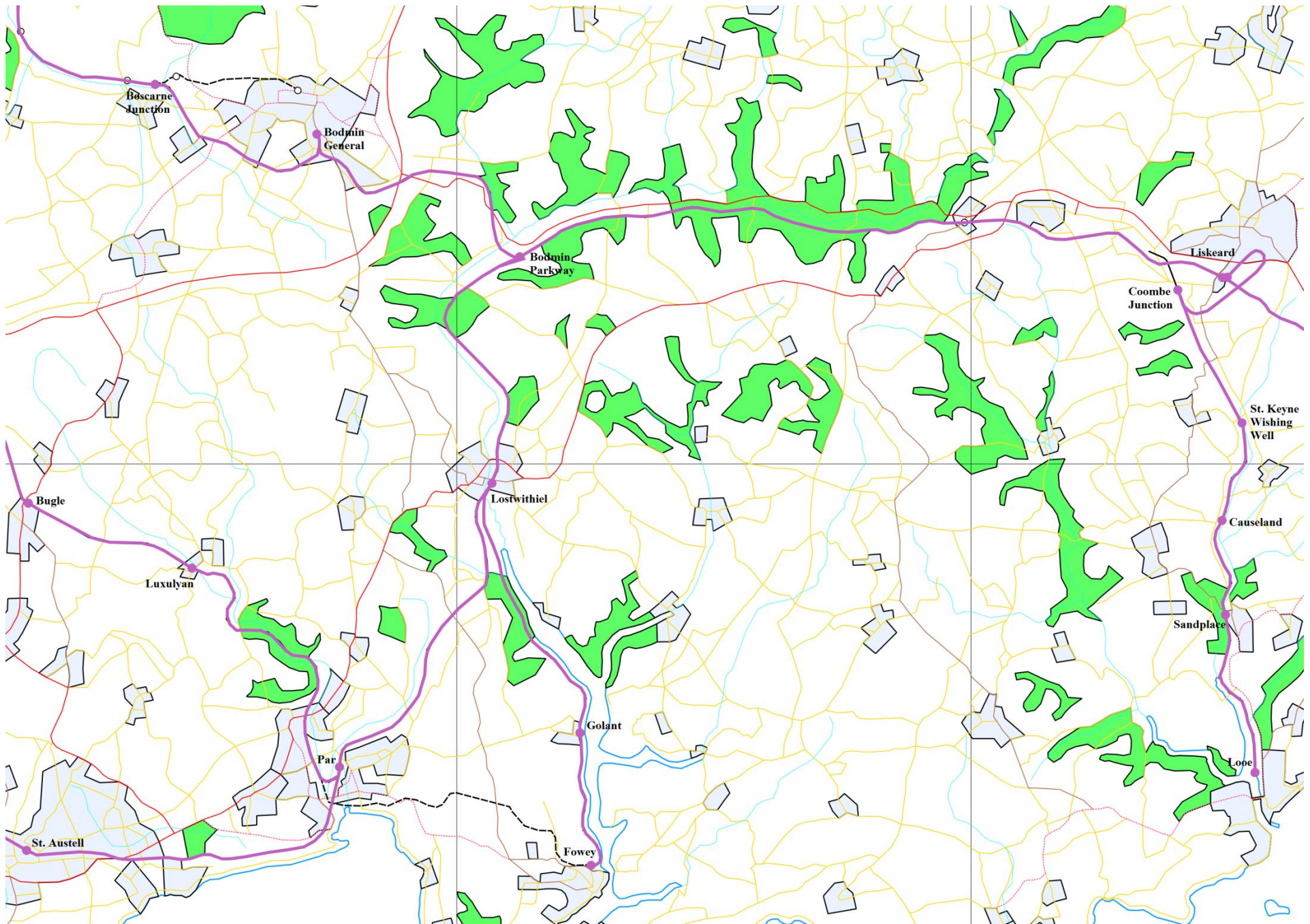
Note how Weymouth has now become a major destination for Cross-Country services – directly from York, and from Cleethorpes, Norwich and Cardiff by changing at Westbury. There is also a direct service from Paddington. The new cross-country services are a major consequence of the reopening of the East-West Rail route between Oxford and Cambridge. As well as the services to Weymouth itself, these services enhance the provision over a wide area of Wiltshire, from Chippenham to Dorchester, which has for many years been very poorly served.

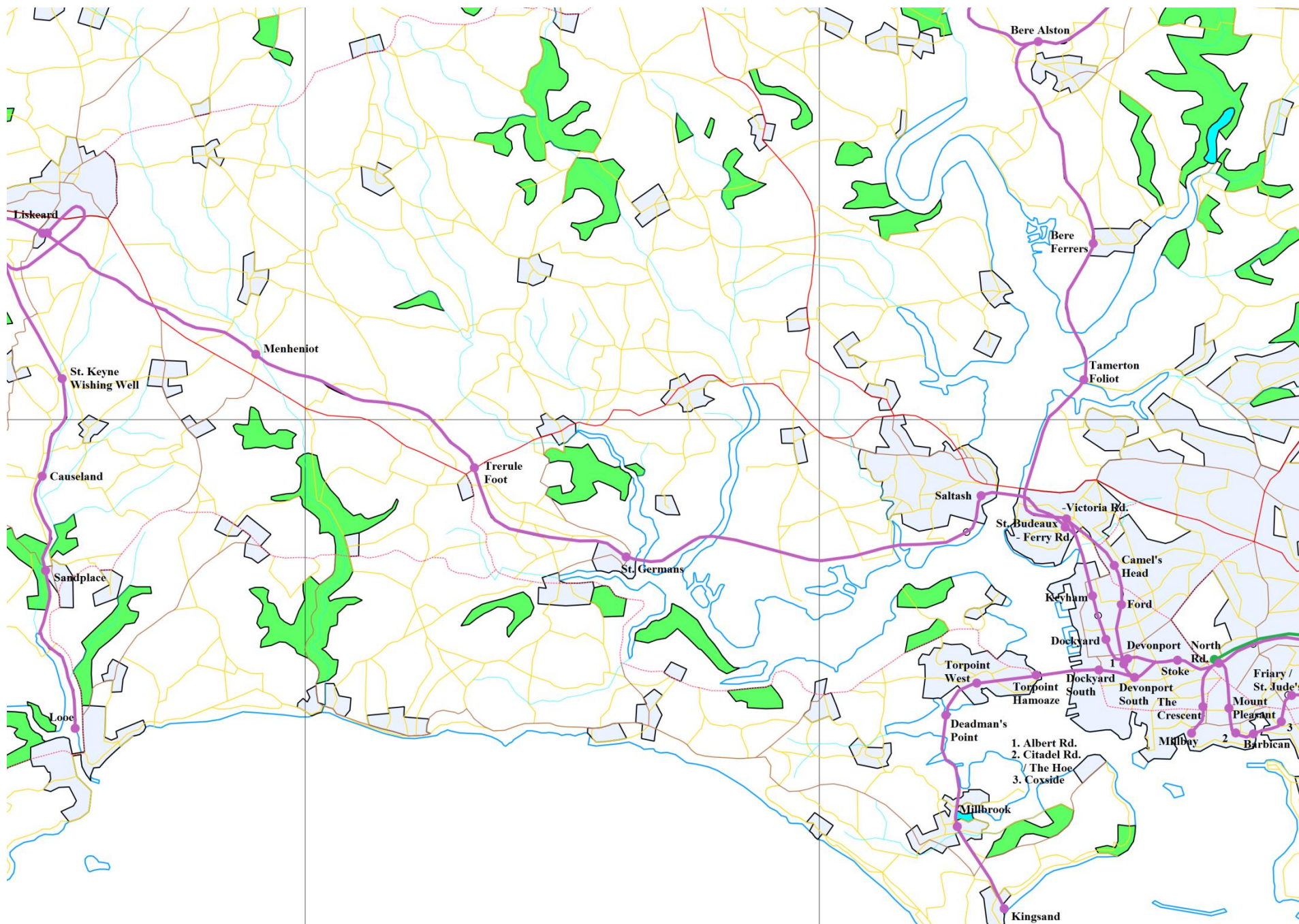


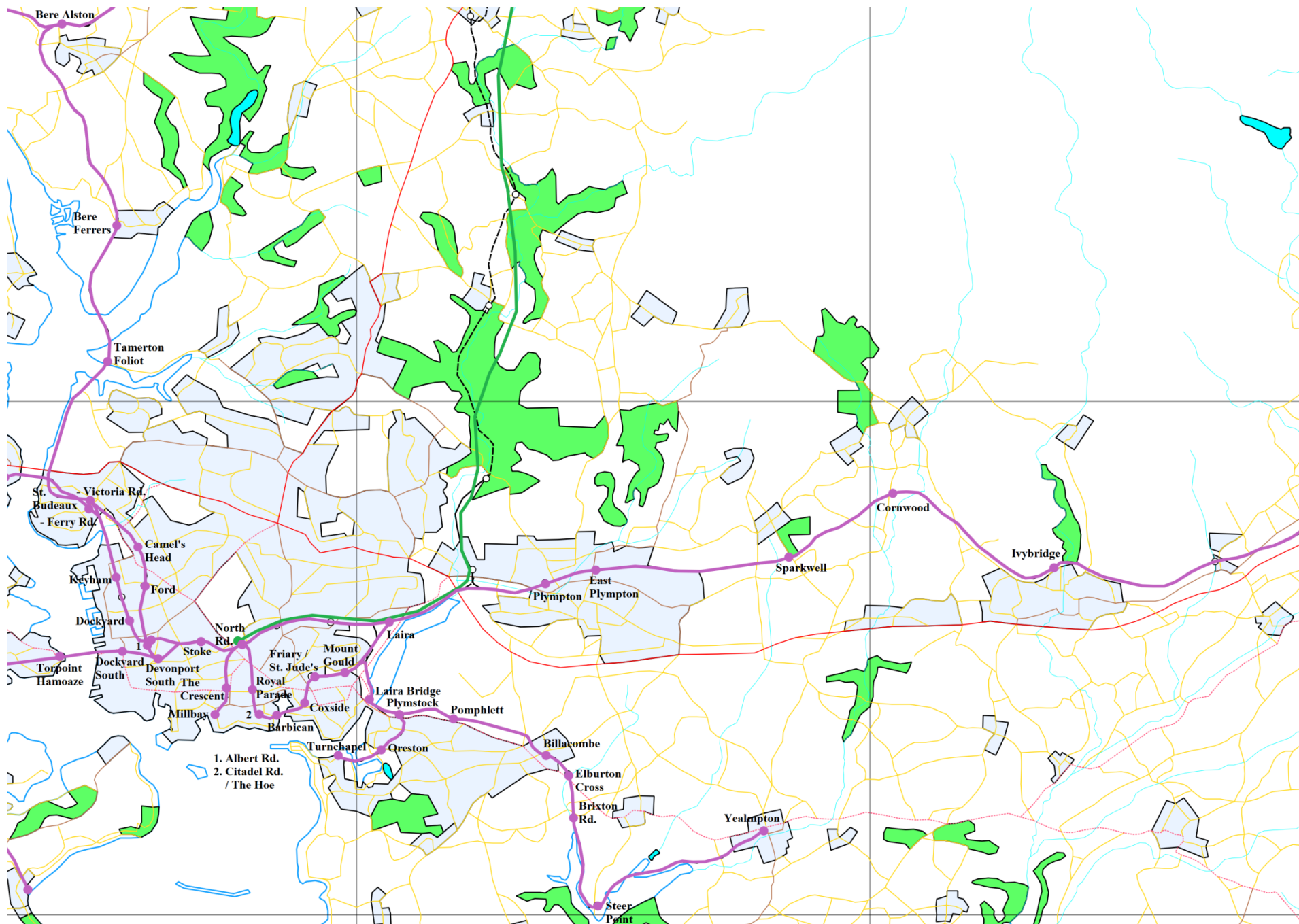


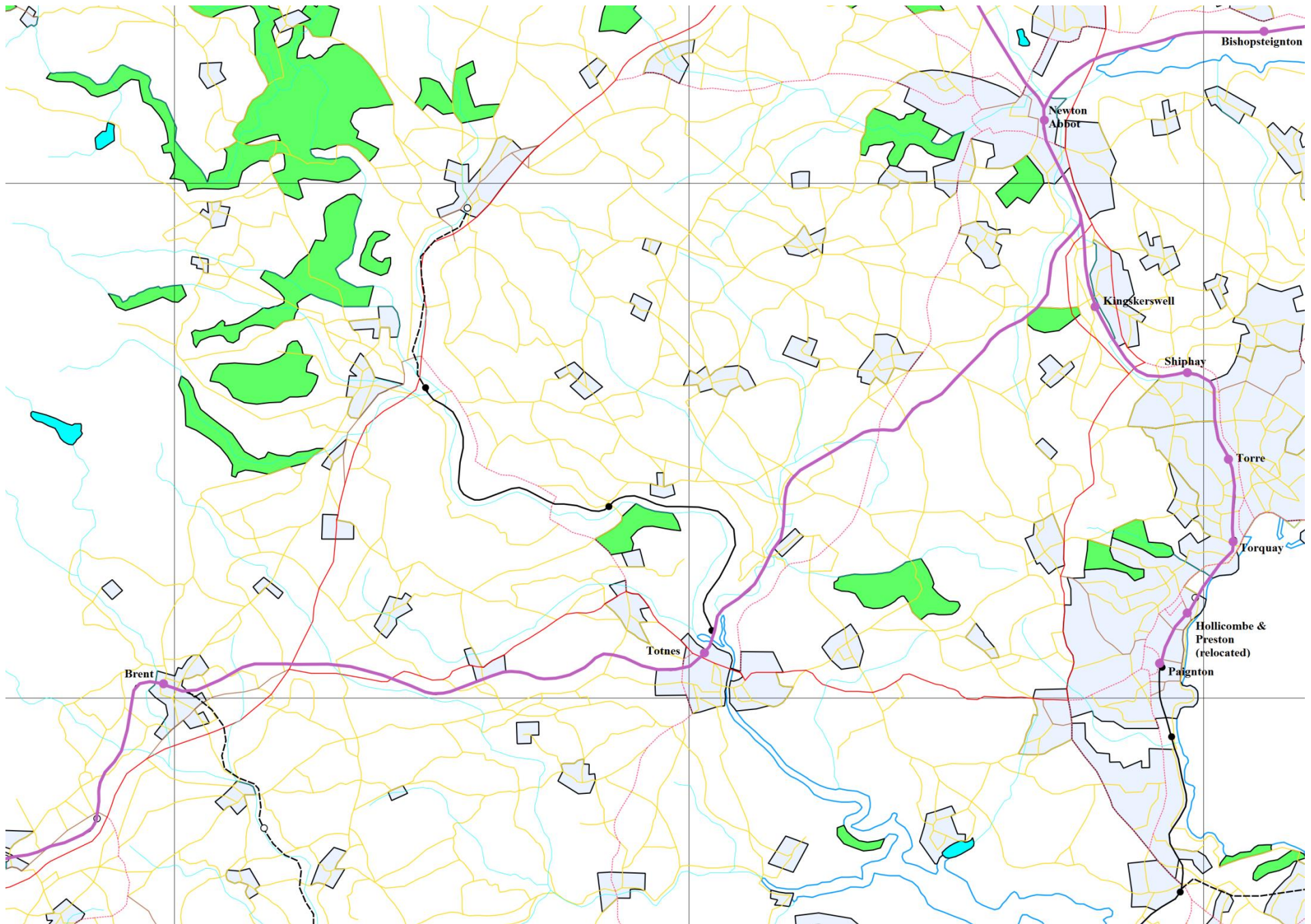


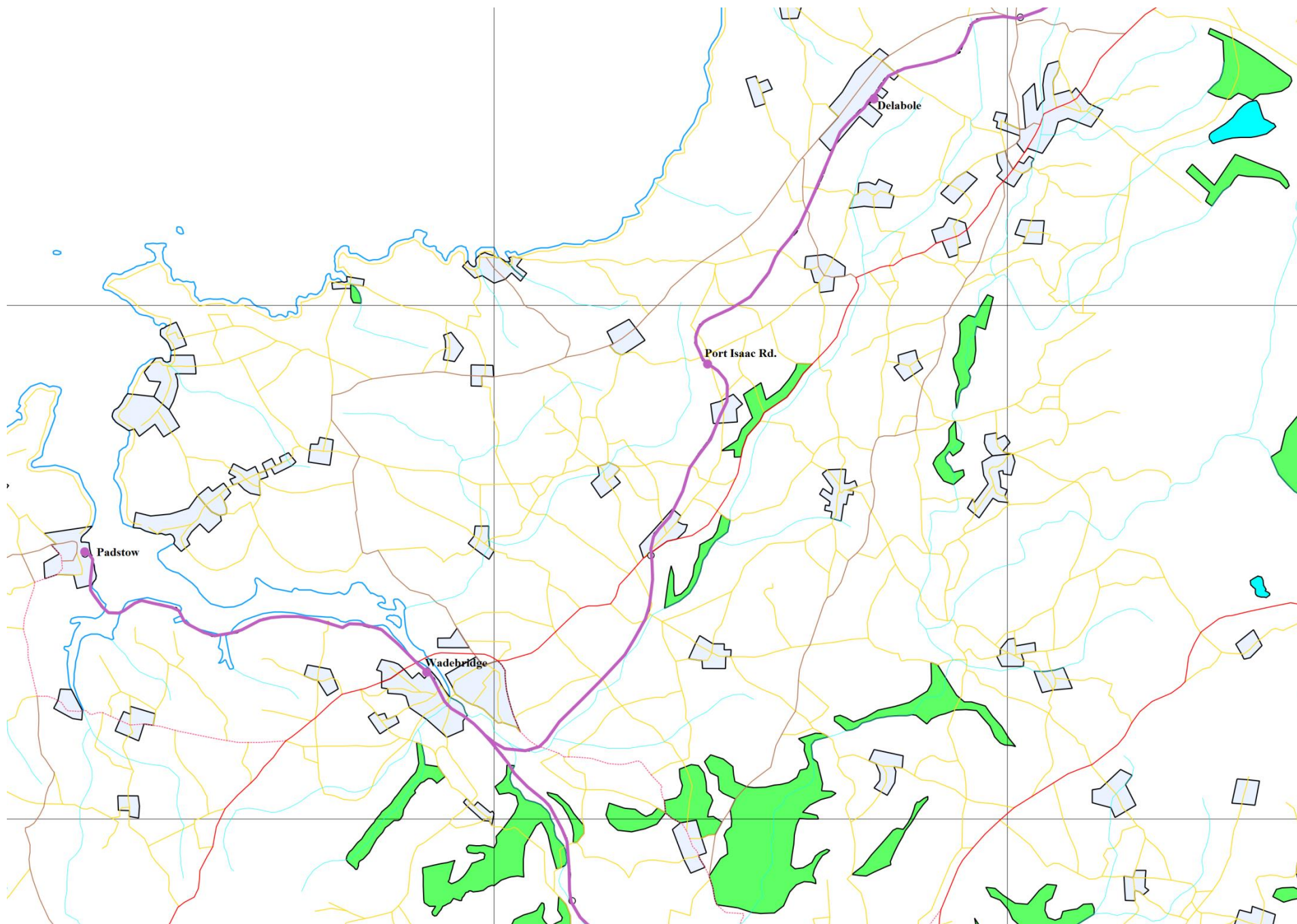


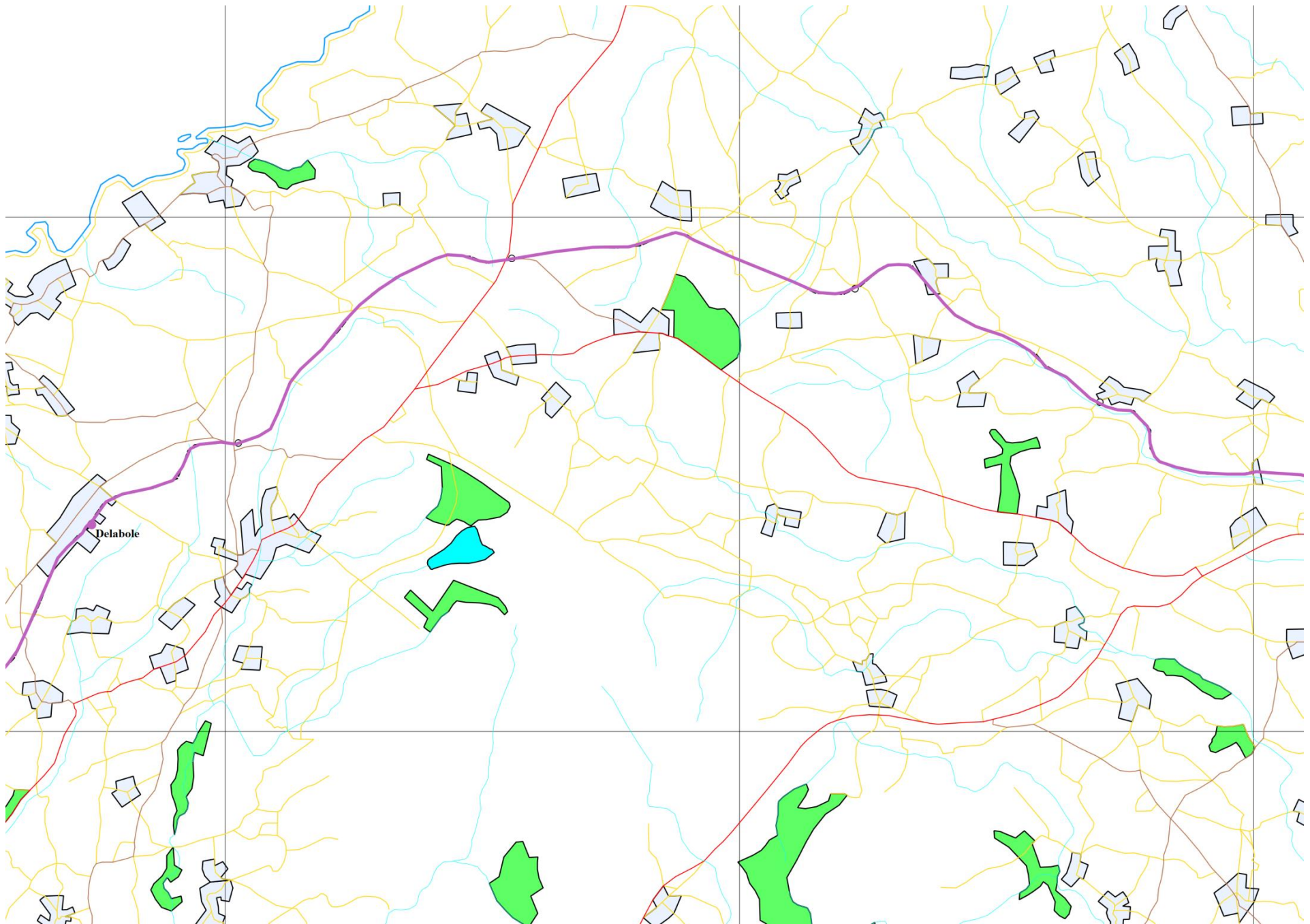


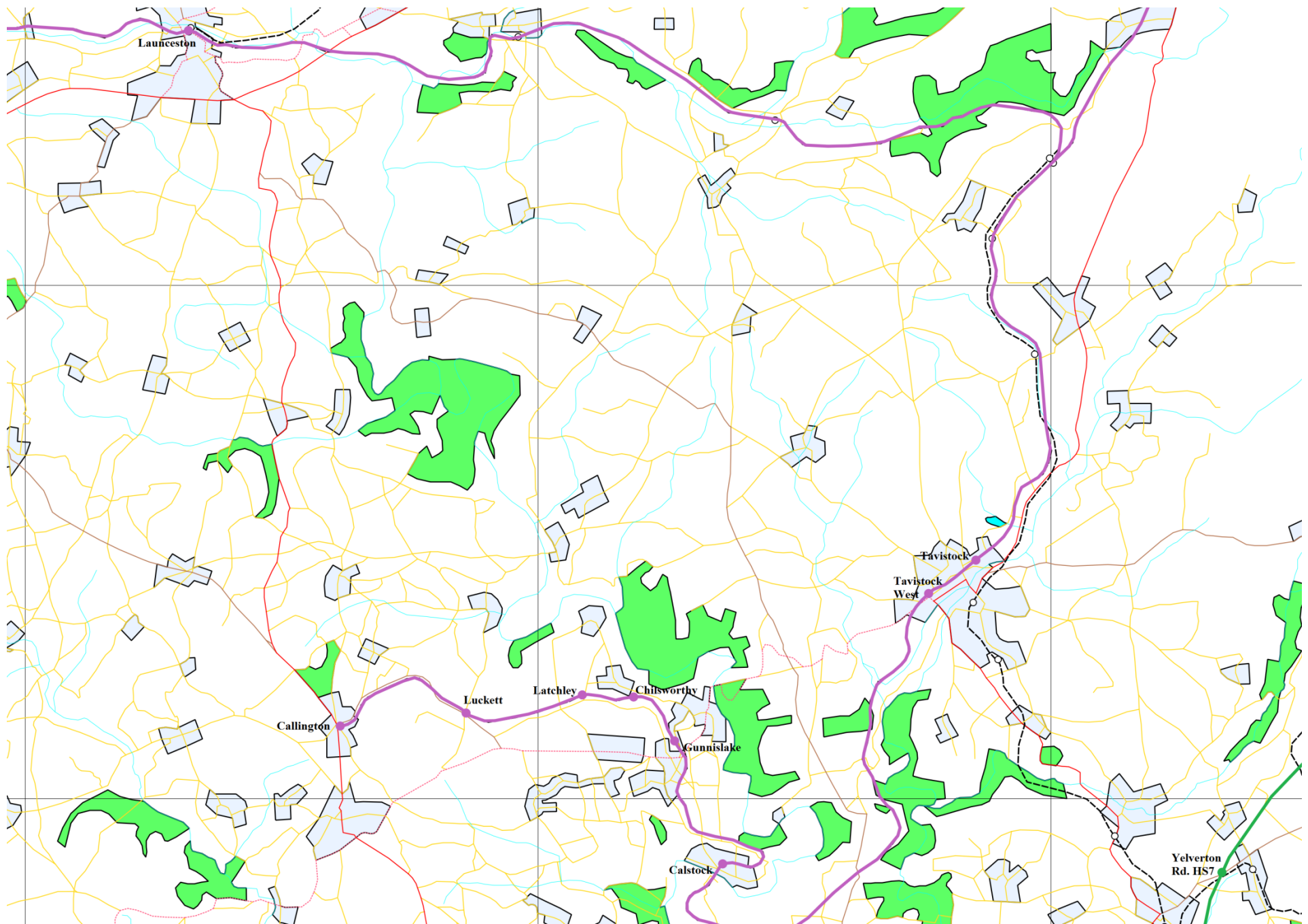


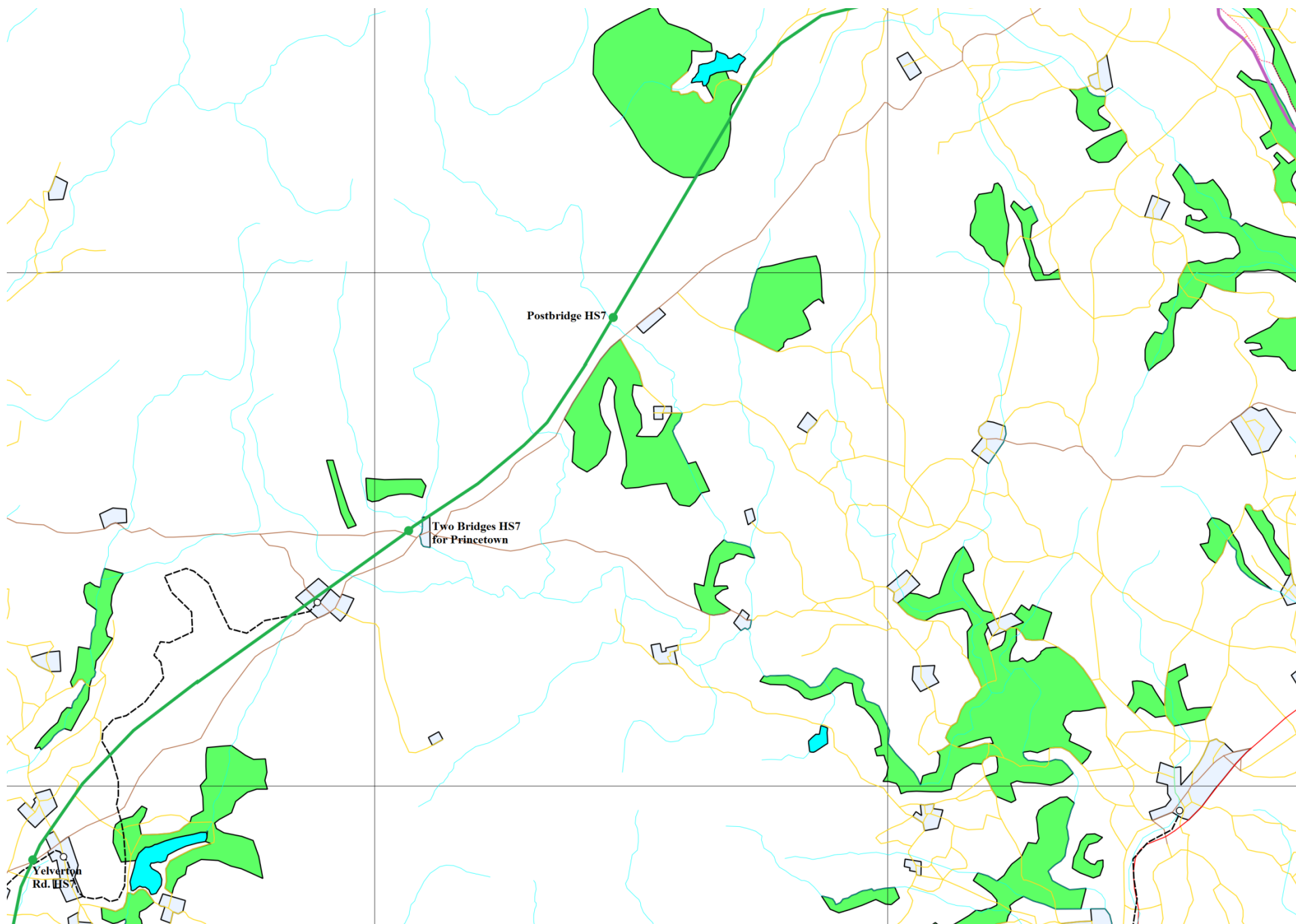


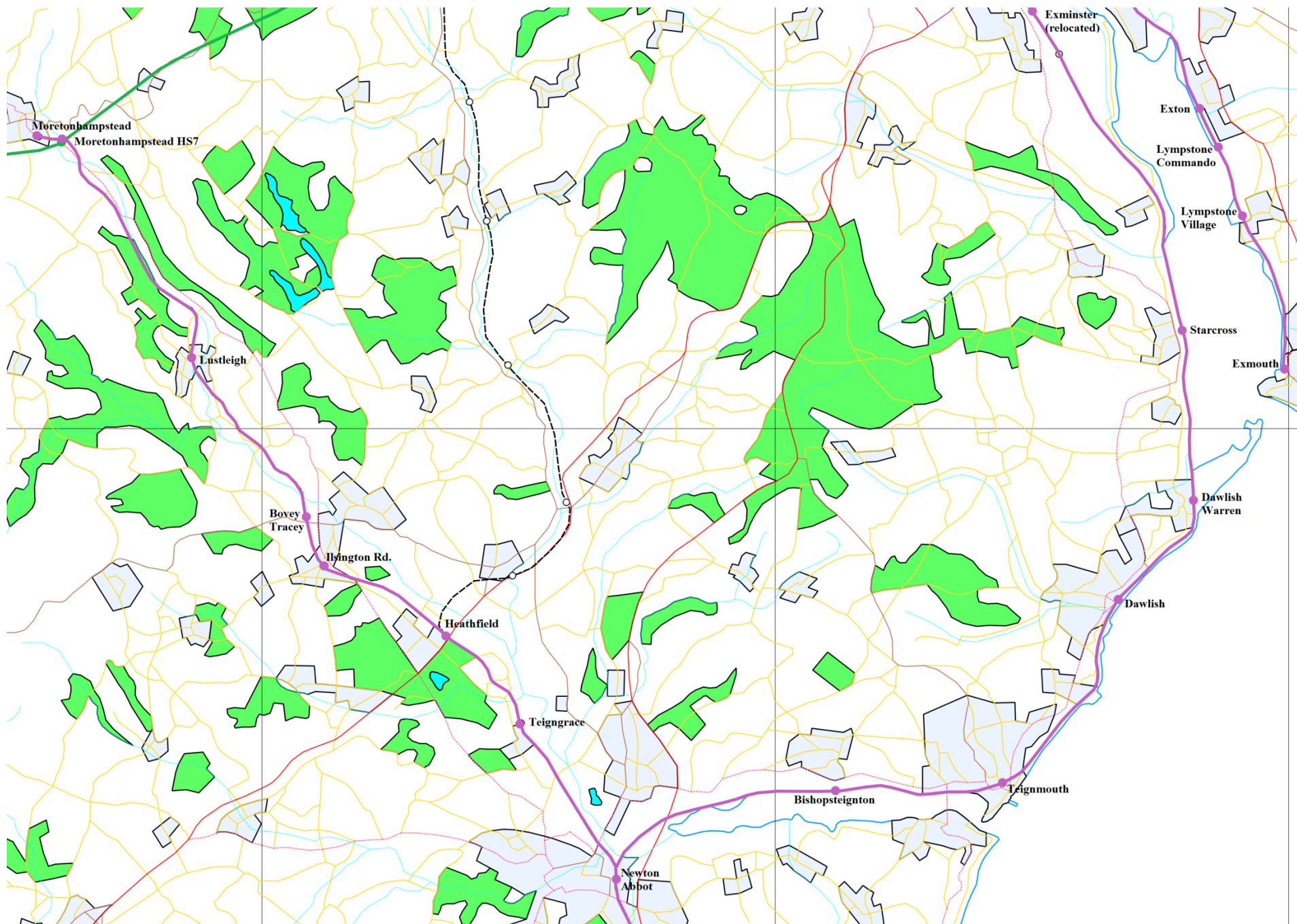


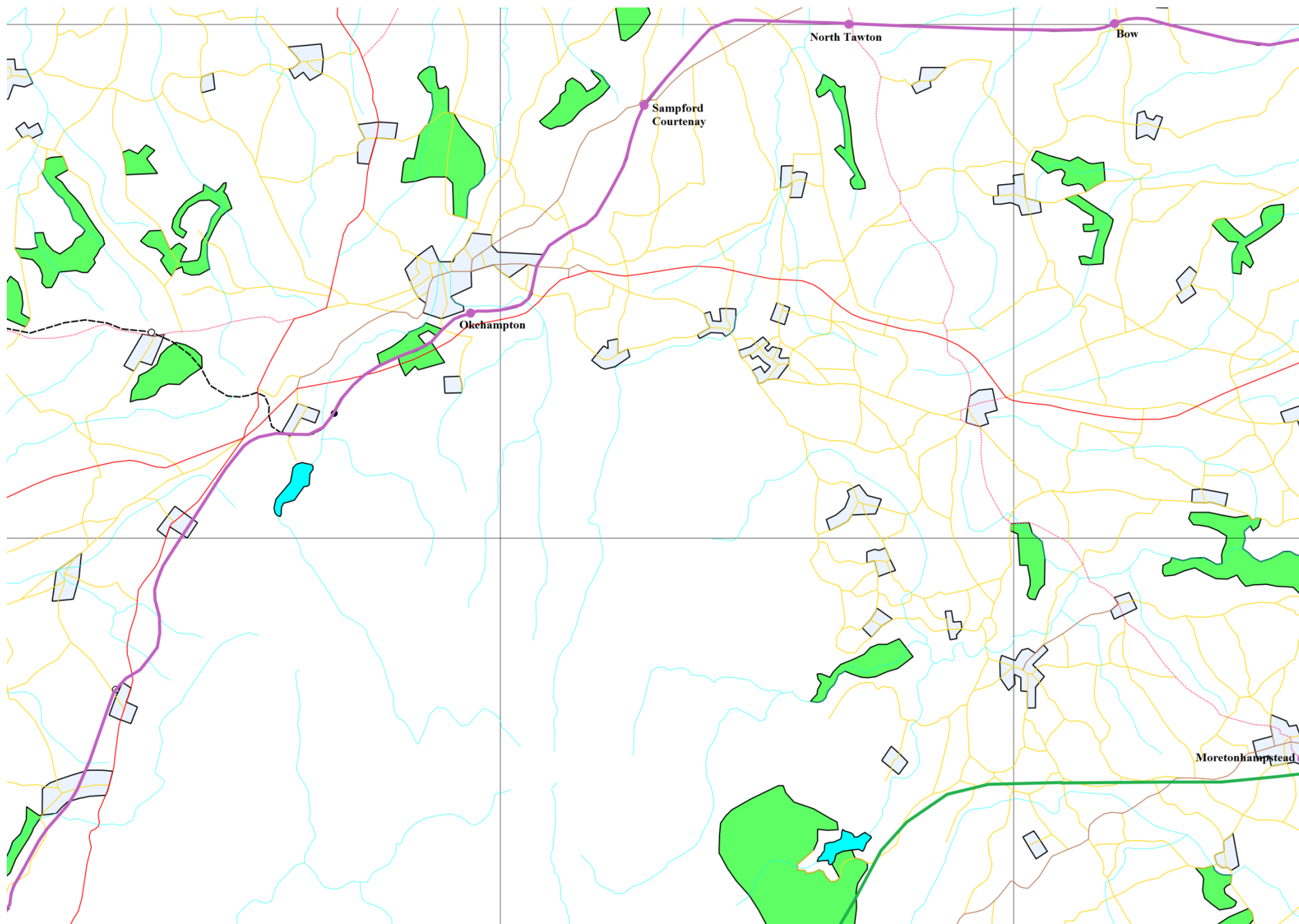


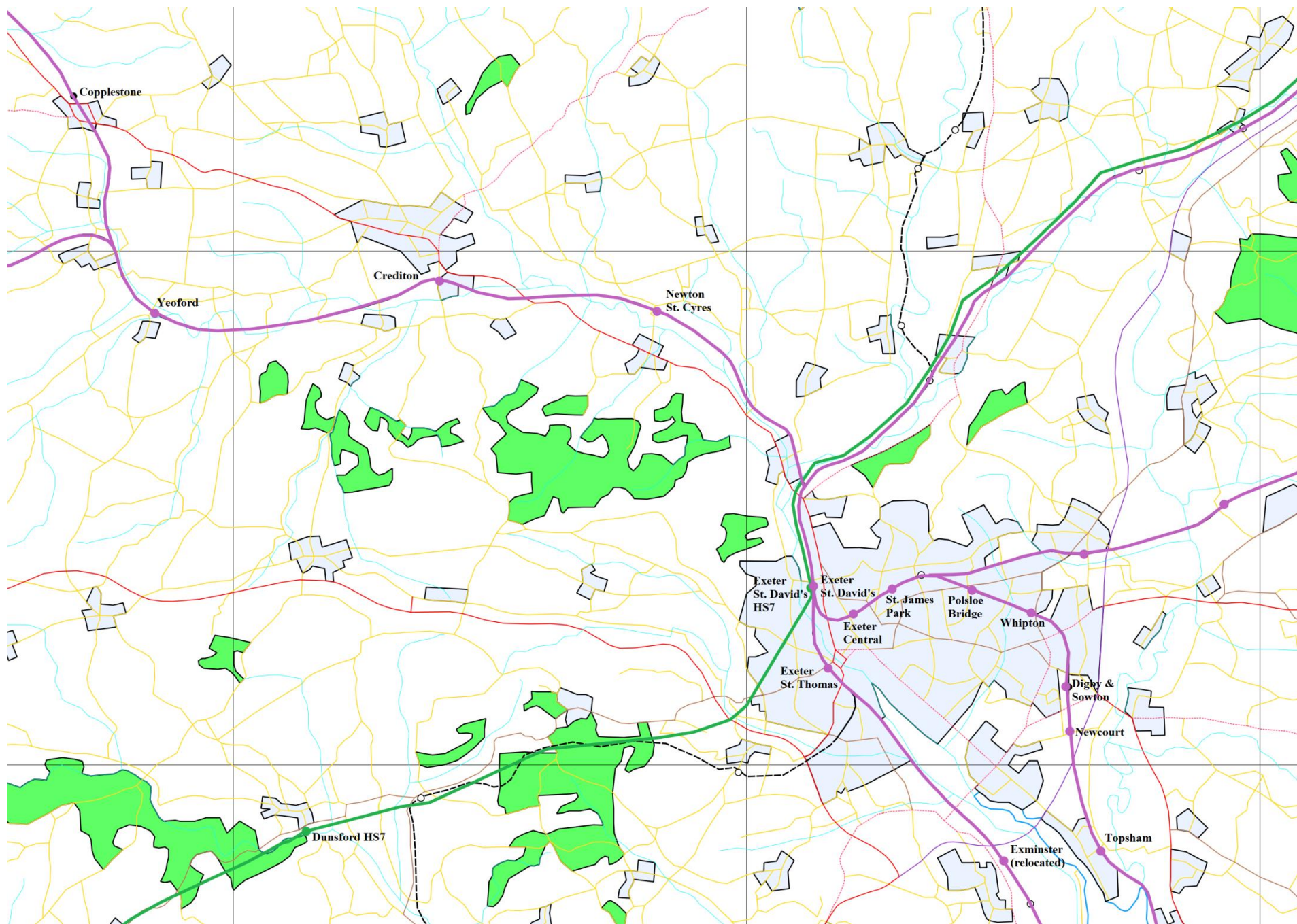


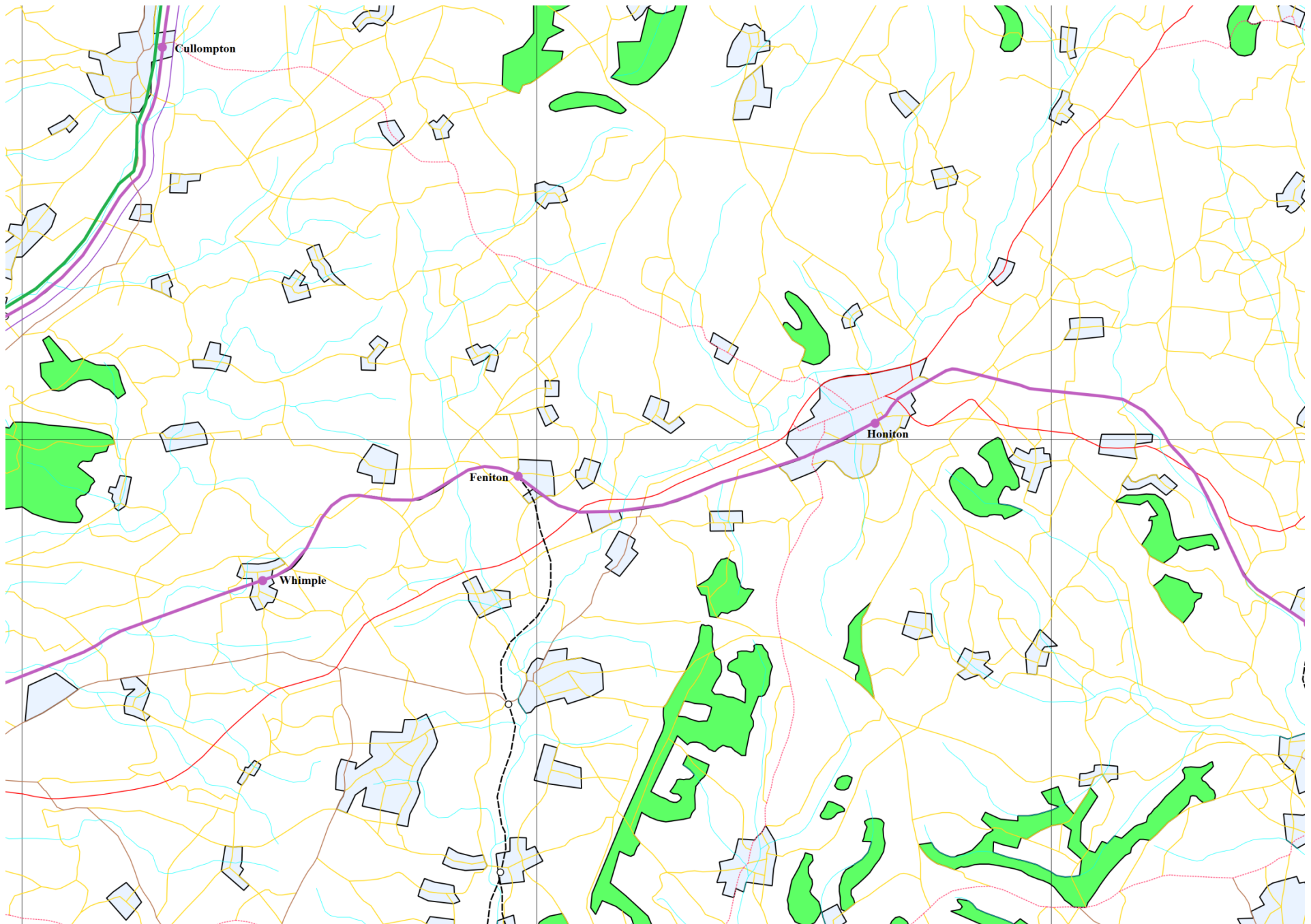


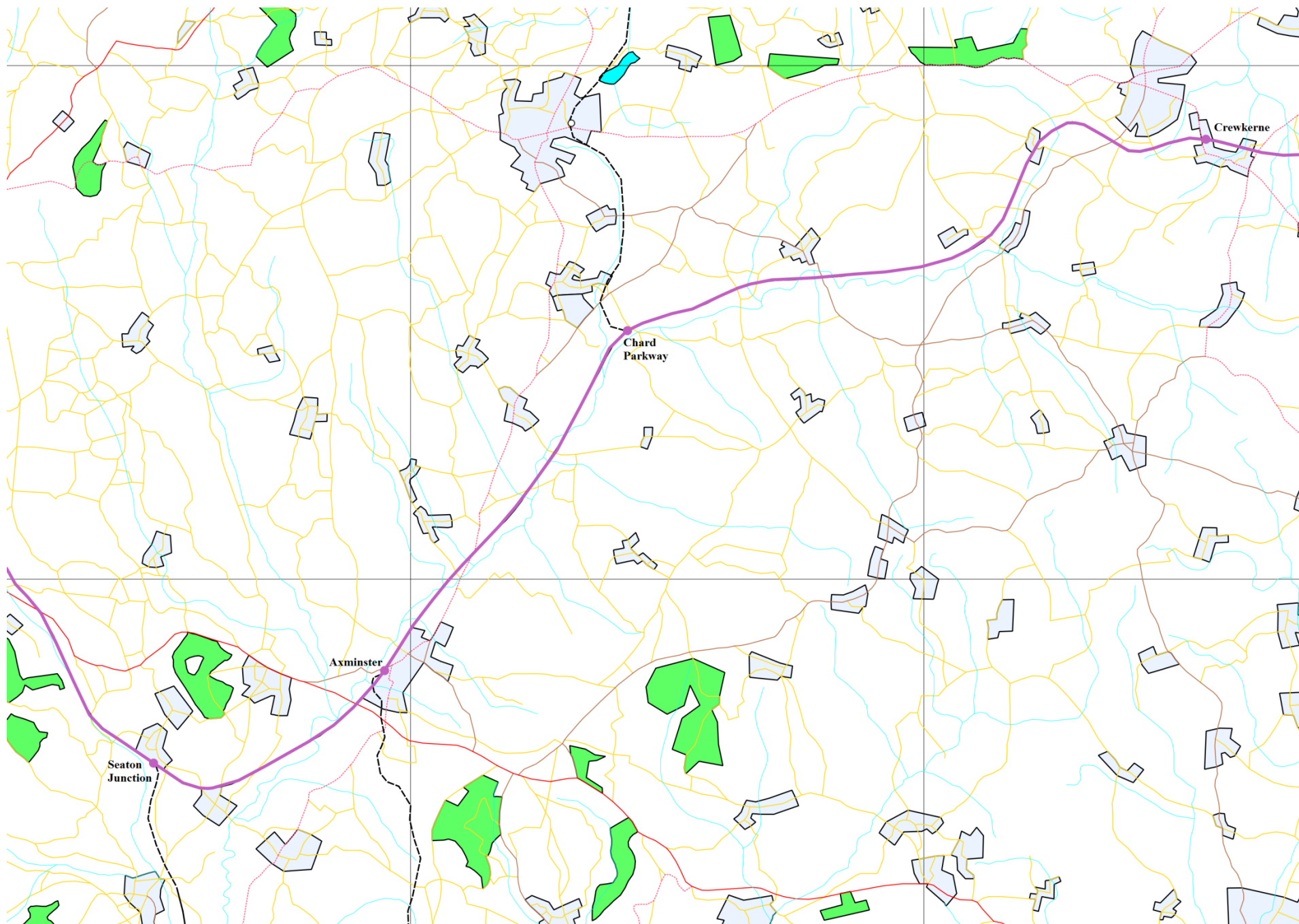


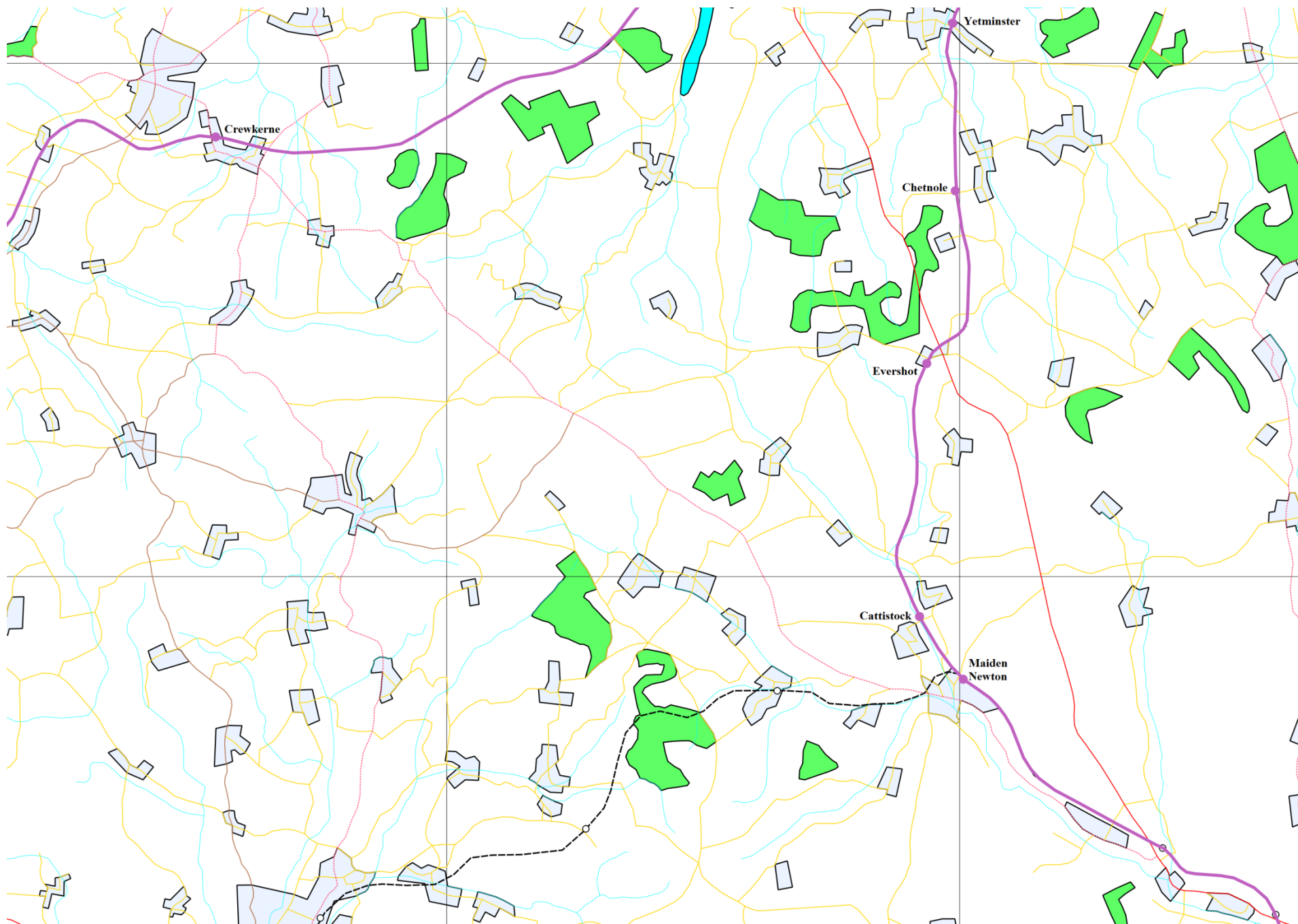


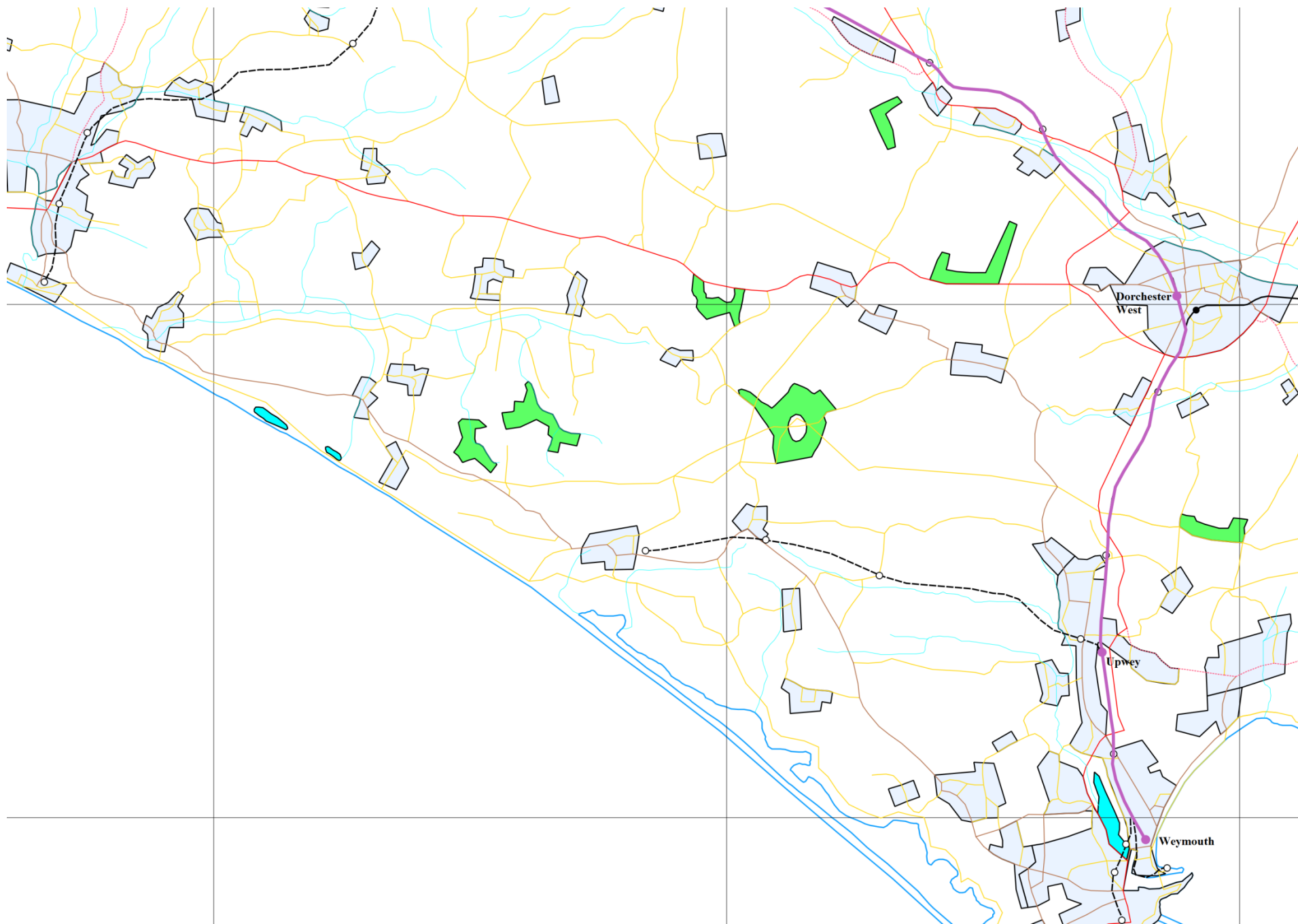


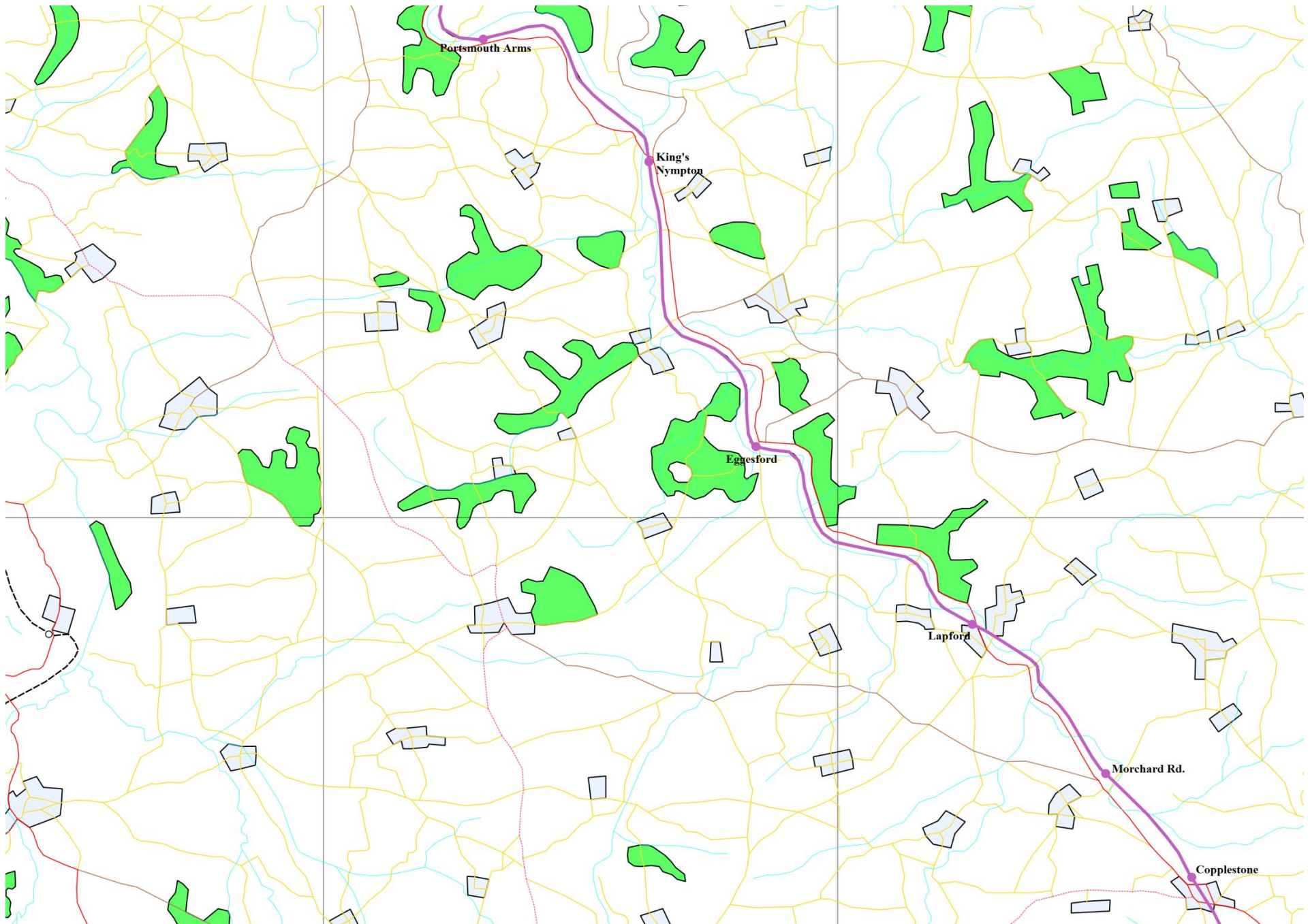


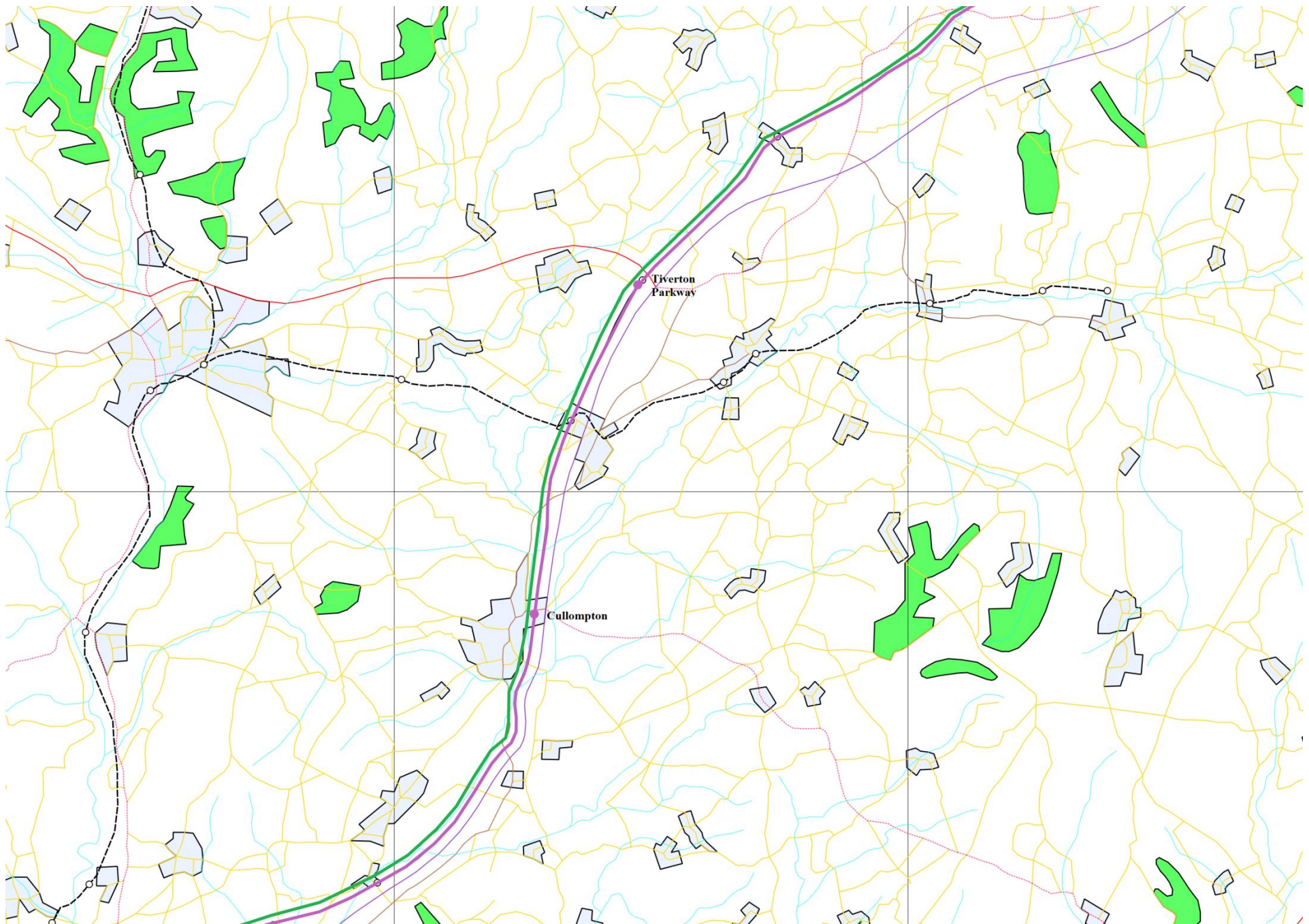


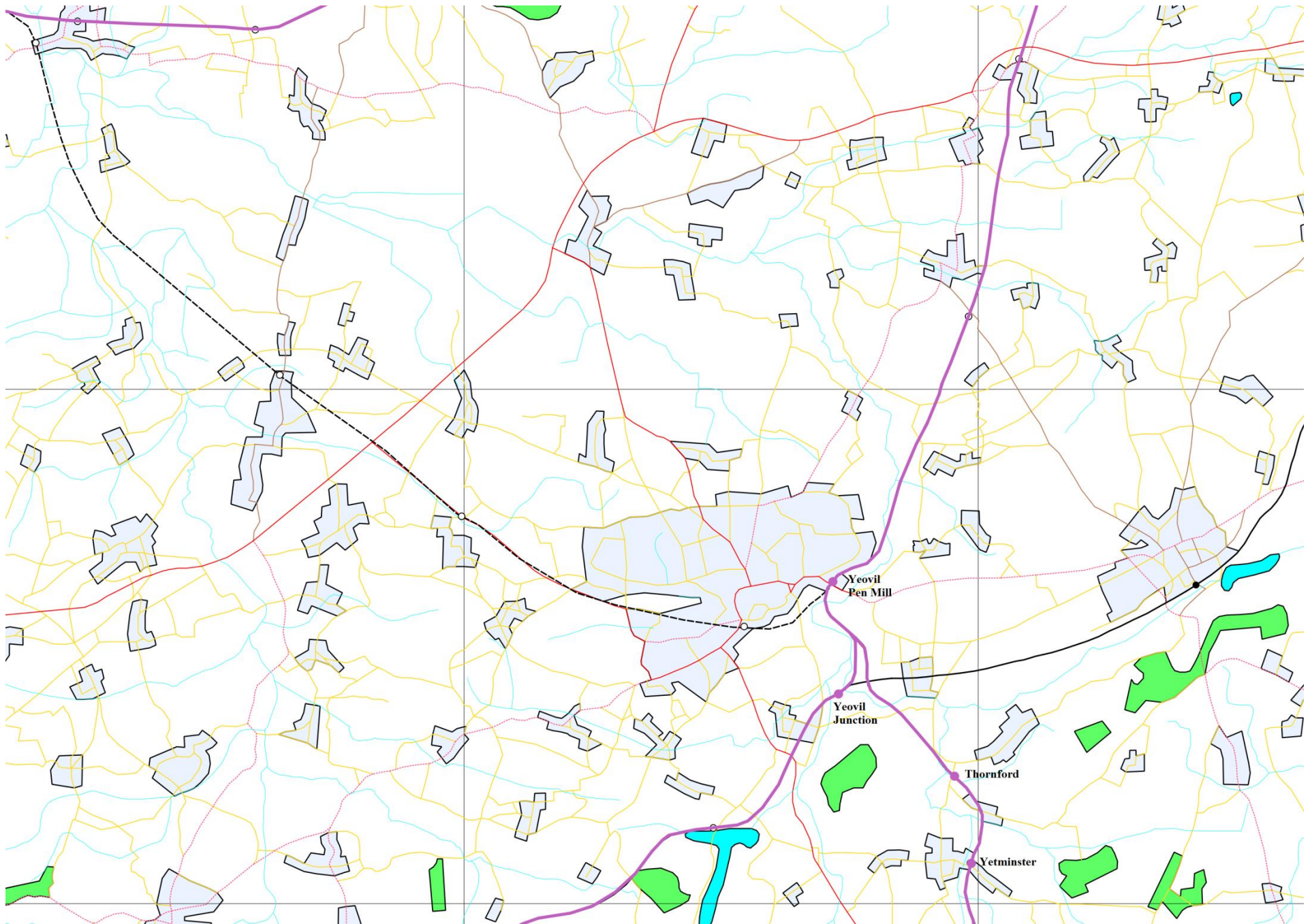


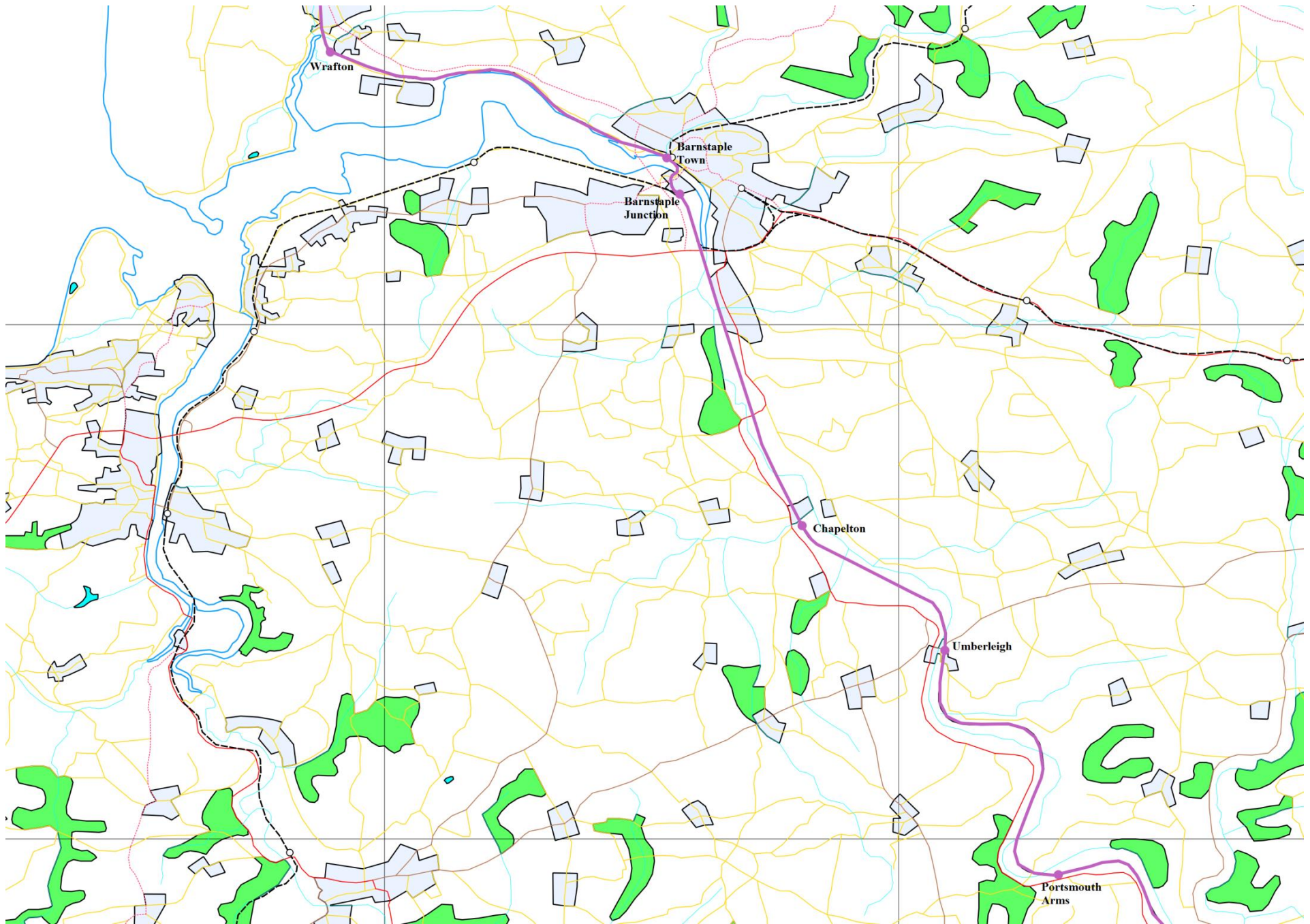


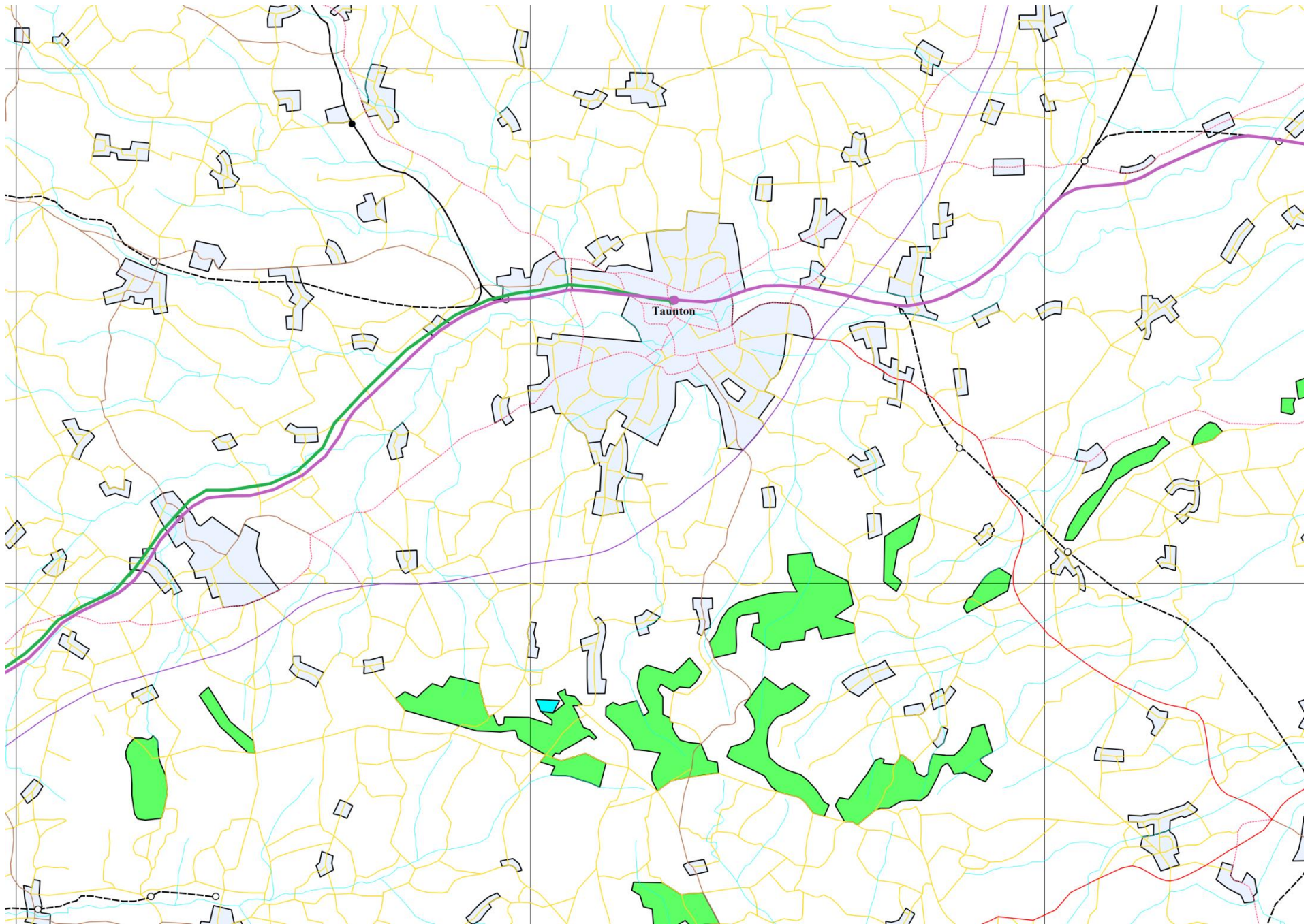


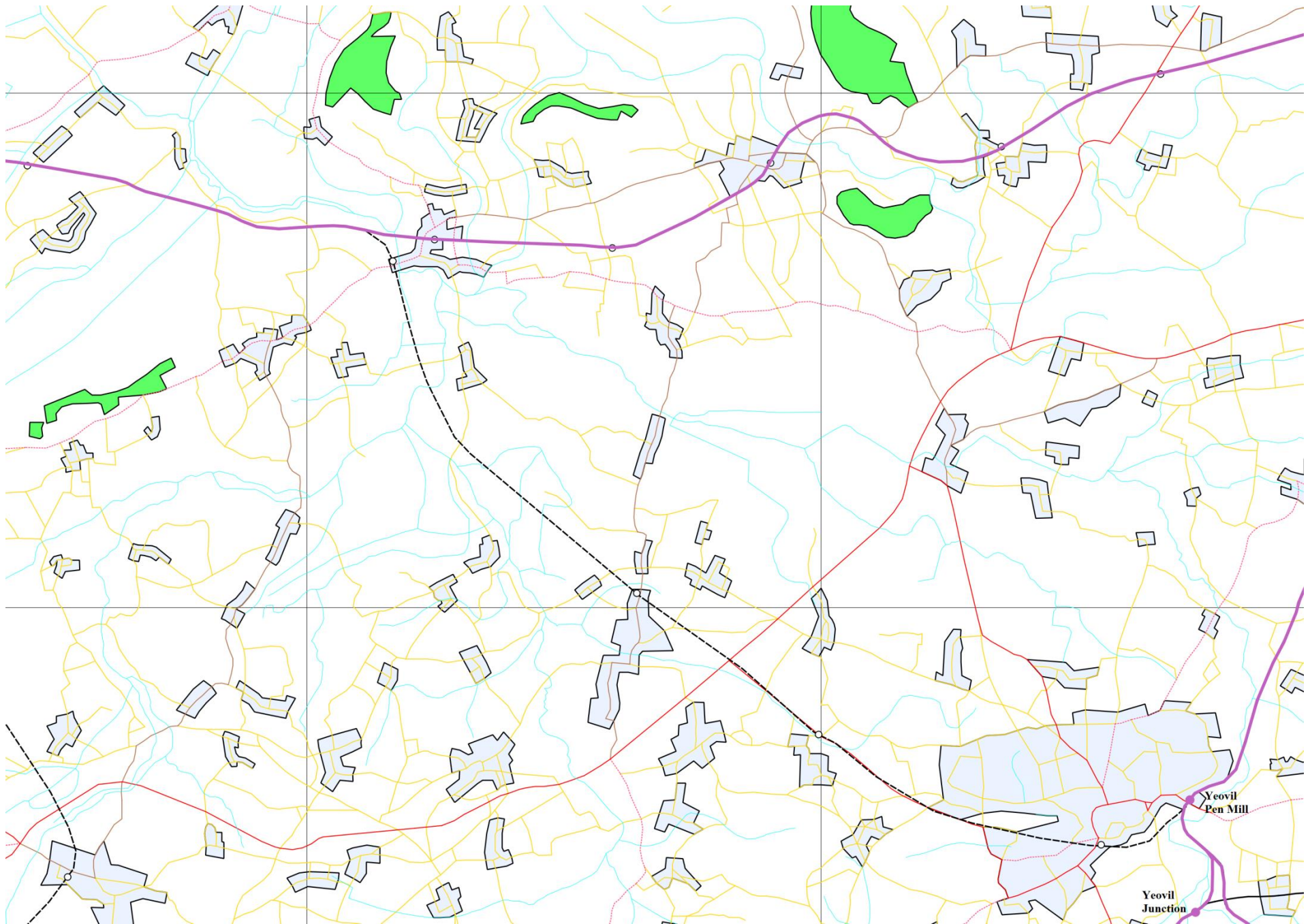


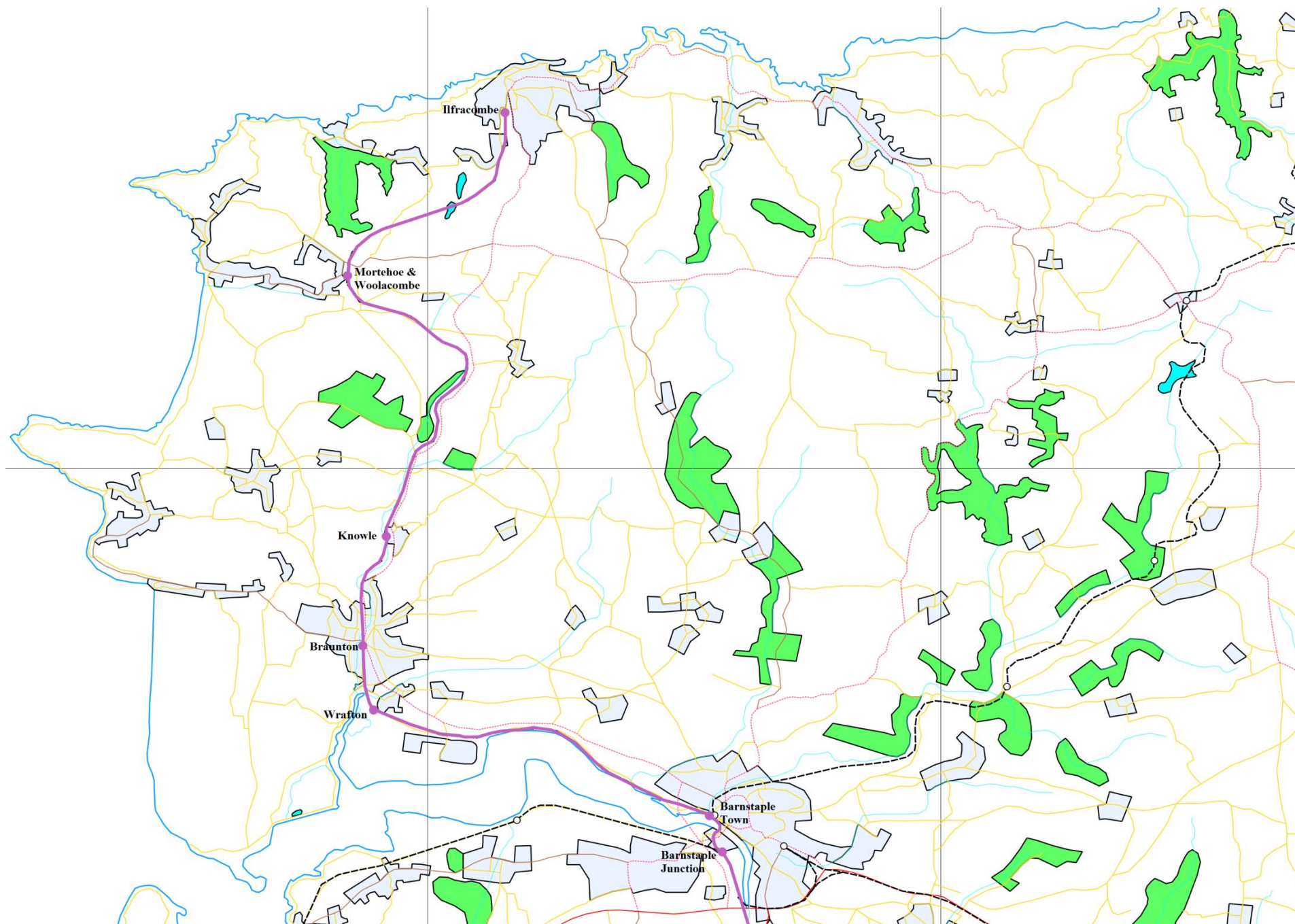


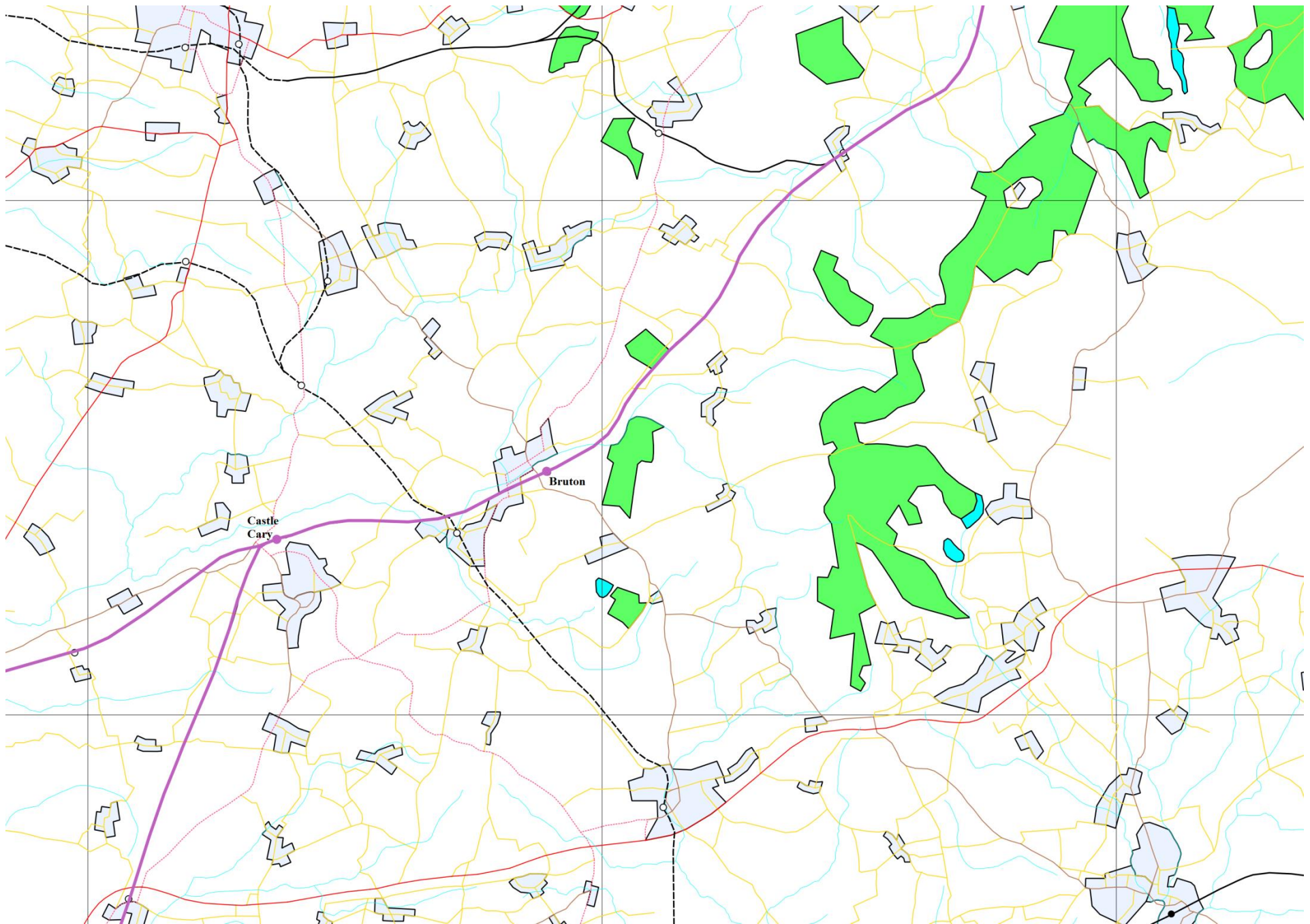


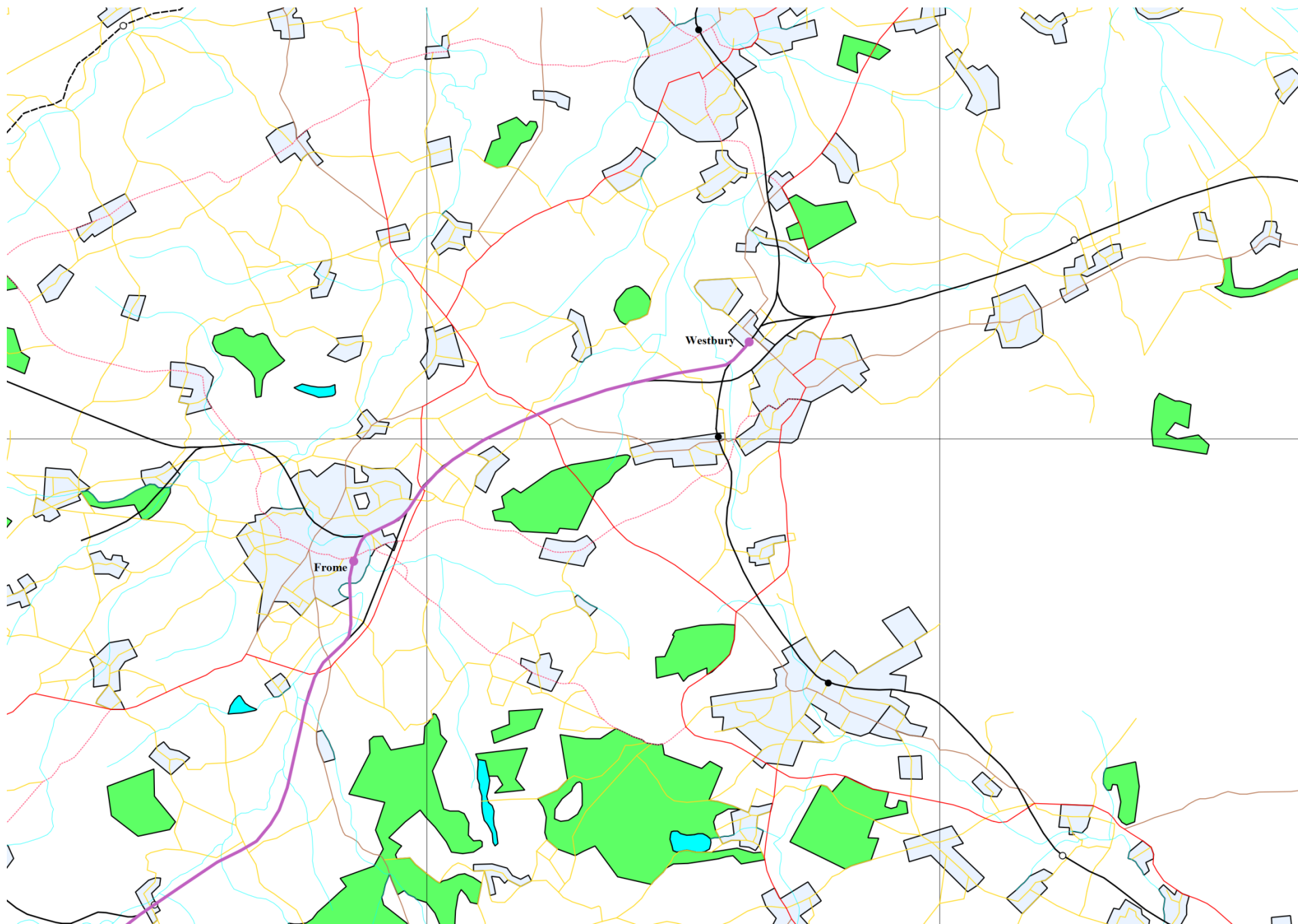


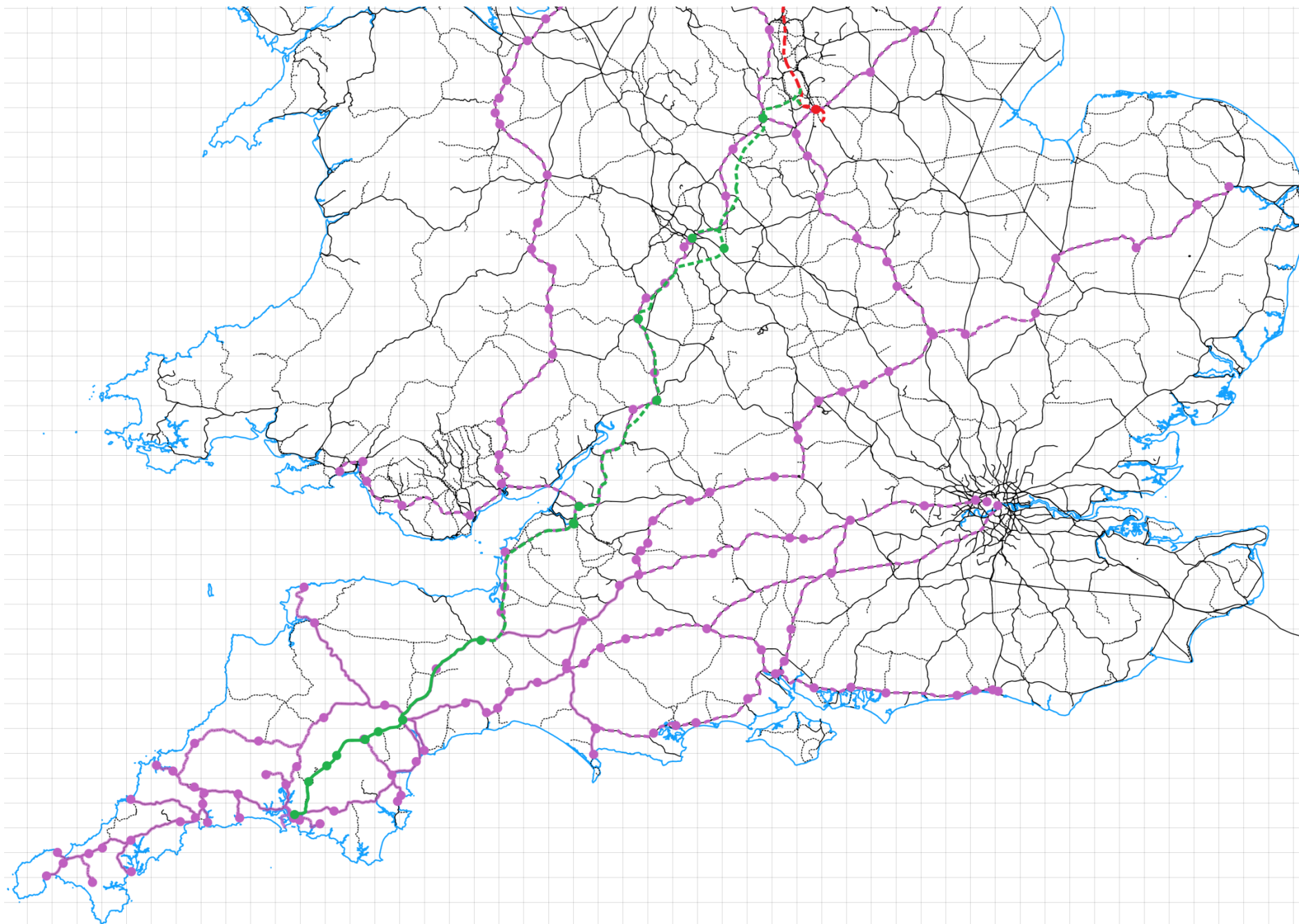


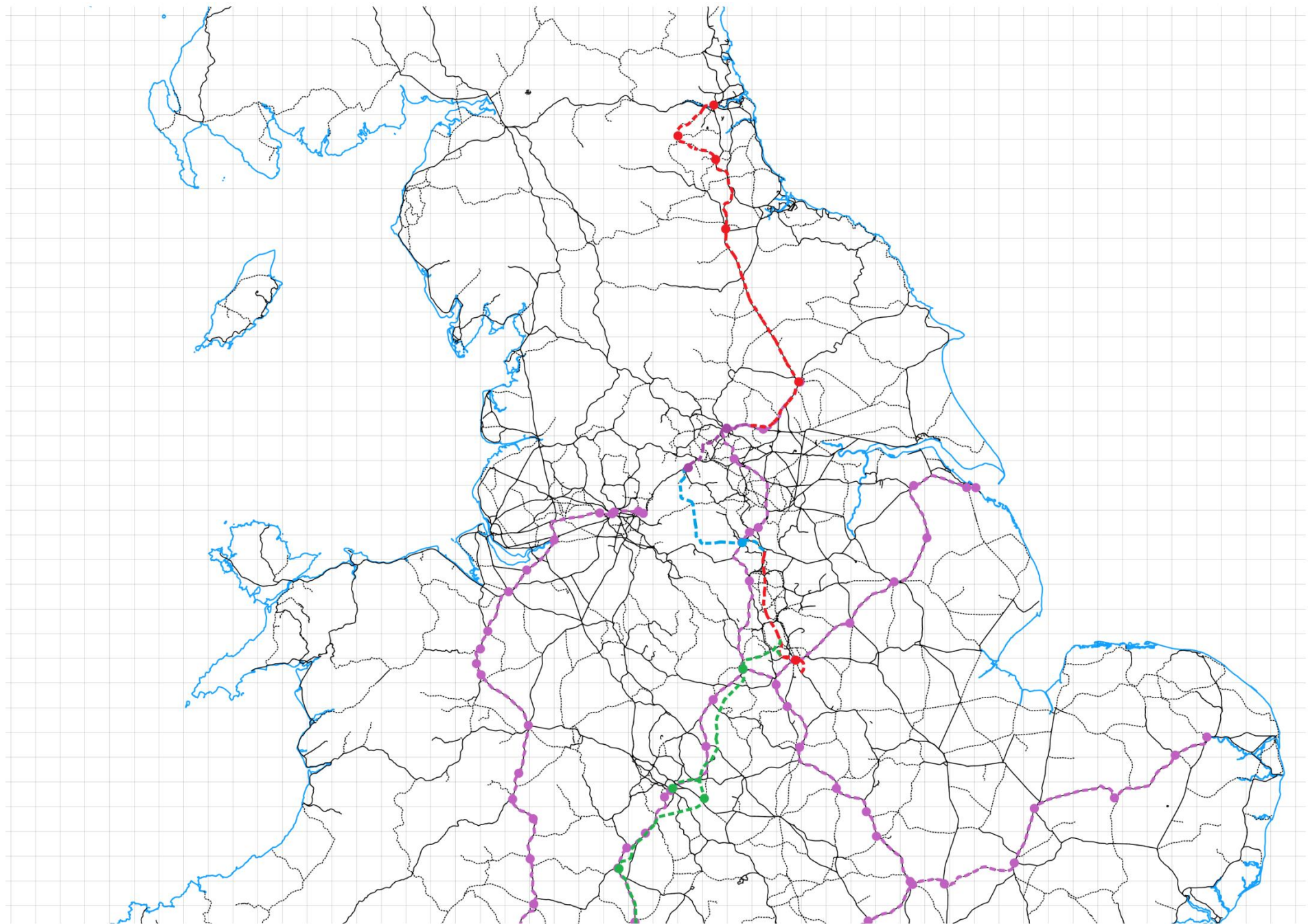




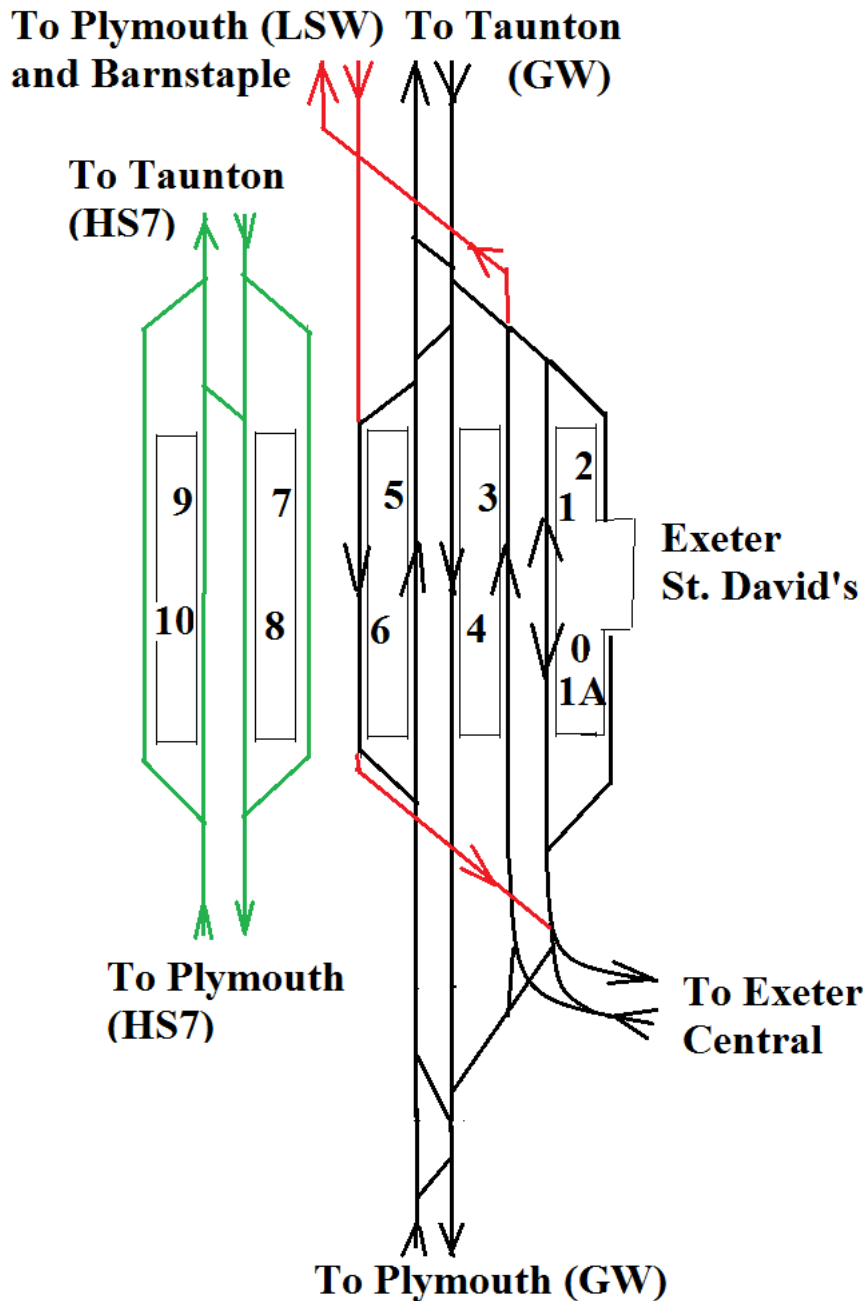








Appendix A – Exeter St. David's Station Arrangements



The layout plan is a topological diagram, showing connections only. No information should be inferred from it as to shape, size or orientation. Those lines in black are the existing layout. Those in green illustrate the proposed HS7 station, immediately adjacent. The new lines, in red, (which cross the other classic lines – no pointwork,) enable a contraflow arrangement around the two island platforms, such that each pair of Plymouth trains make cross-platform connections with each other, thus each train to Plymouth via Newton Abbot, on platform 4, connects with its corresponding train to Plymouth via Okehampton, on platform 3. Likewise each train from Plymouth via Newton Abbot, on platform 5, connects with its corresponding train from Plymouth via Okehampton, on platform 6.

There is no possibility of these trains getting in each other's way since they approach and depart from the platforms in opposite directions. Accordingly, the connecting lines crossing on the flat are entirely appropriate. Even

in the other case there is no problem: a train to Plymouth via Newton Abbot, on platform 4, and a train from Plymouth via Okehampton, on platform 6, approach the station by entirely separate routes, as do a train from Plymouth via Newton Abbot, on platform 5, and a train to Plymouth via Okehampton, on platform 3. The pairs of trains in these last two examples must not attempt to **depart** from St. David's simultaneously, or they would indeed get in each other's way, but arrival is no problem.

Platform 0 is new (but probably existed previously) and platform 2 has no use in the current plans (but could serve a future service to Tiverton, by the restored route). The HS7 provision is included because HS7, most unusually, has a stopping service between Exeter and Plymouth, serving various locations around Dartmoor, which currently have no service at all.