

# Birmingham & Black Country Local Sites Assessment Report

EcoRecord Reference	Site Name	Grid Reference	Designation(s)	Survey Date(s)
WV017	Grassy Lane (Woodhayes Sports Ground)	SJ938022	SLINC part	7/8/2018
Planning Authority	Site Ownership	Area/Length	Reason for Survey	Report Date
City of Wolverhampton Council	Private	2 ha	BC Call for Sites	05/12/2018

<b>Meets LS Criteria</b>	None	<b>Type</b>	i.e. Wildlife/Geological
--------------------------	------	-------------	--------------------------

<b>Amendment(s)</b>	Deletion	i.e. None; New Site; Upgrade; Downgrade; Extension; Whole/Part Deletion
<b>Description</b>	Due to over-grazing and the accumulation of rubbish, the quality of the site has decreased and no longer reaches the threshold for SLINC status.	

## Citation (Summary of Value)

Grassy Lane is a small field surrounded by hedges, on the edge of Wolverhampton. It has a variety of habitats which have the potential to support a wide range of flora and fauna. Although small, the site has some species diversity and the grassland contains hay meadow species such as Crested Dog's Tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*), Meadow Vetchling (*Lathyrus pratensis*) and Bird's-foot Trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*) and has previously been noted as having areas of an acidic nature, but shows signs of over-grazing. The field pattern exists from the time of enclosure, though it has since been used as a sports ground and there is a suggestion from local people that the site is protected by a covenant. The site acts as a buffer between urban and rural Wolverhampton and could therefore be important to local wildlife.

## Local Site Selection Criteria

Ecological		
<b>Habitat Diversity</b>	M	The site has a good range of habitats from bare ground and neutral grassland through to tall ruderal, scrub, hedgerows and large trees. Scattered and dense scrub and intact and defunct hedgerow also provide further diversity among habitats and structural diversity within these. Topography is mostly flat, except for a bank along part of the southern boundary of the site.
<b>Species Diversity</b>	L-M	The plant species diversity of the site is fairly high due to the range of habitats and the variety within them. These provide opportunities for a variety of fauna, a range of species of which were recorded incidentally during the survey. Reduced grazing could also improve species diversity.
<b>Habitat Rarity</b>	L-M	The site includes UKBAP habitat (hedgerow), which are not common in Birmingham and the Black Country. However, the condition of these is average.
<b>Species Rarity</b>	L	Most of the plant species on site are <i>Common</i> or <i>Very Common</i> , however two species recorded on site are <i>Rare</i> .
<b>Size or Extent</b>	L	In the context of Birmingham and Black Country this site has a small extent.
<b>Naturalness</b>	L-M	The habitats appear to be semi-natural and the species are predominantly native. Natural succession has been allowed in parts of this site. However, there is an area of rubbish, vehicles and stables at the entrance to the site.
<b>Position &amp; Connectivity</b>	M	The site is positioned directly between the very urban parts of Wolverhampton and the more rural landscape, linking into the Staffordshire countryside. There are no adjoining designated sites, but Northcote Farm SINC/SLINC, Kitchen Lane SLINC and two canal SINC are nearby, making the site a part of a network of stepping stones across the area.
Geological		
<b>Not assessed</b>	N/A	
Social		
<b>Historical &amp; Cultural</b>	M	These fields were probably enclosed in the late Medieval/early Post Medieval period. It is possible that this area was strip fields in the Medieval period.
<b>Access</b>	L	The site has no access to the public.
<b>Aesthetic</b>	M	The site is aesthetically pleasing due to its naturalness, however again it could be improved by reduction in grazing and removal of the rubbish at the entrance. It provides a view across green space for the adjoining houses.
<b>Recorded History</b>	L	There are few details on the history of the site, although historical maps record the field pattern and also its use as a sports ground with a pavilion and then a clubhouse.
<b>Value for Learning</b>	L	The site has no public access, so is not currently used for learning.

## Site Description

The site is located near the West Midlands and Staffordshire border. To the south and west of the site is a housing estate and the edge of urban Wolverhampton. North and east of the site is the rural landscape of Staffordshire. On the eastern side of the site is a public open space, managed by the City of Wolverhampton Council.

This site used to be used as a sports ground from approximately 1955, according to historical maps, but it has since been abandoned and is currently used for horse grazing. In 1973 there was a structure in the northern half of the site labelled 'club' and from approximately 1958 to 1973 the site had a pavillion, positioned on the eastern edge of the grassland. During the survey local people suggested that the site was protected by a covenant allowing use for sports or grazing only.

The northern end of the site is now used for old vehicle (and parts) storage/ waste. Stables are next to this waste. Also at the northern end of this site are a number of patches of scrub, as well as a large patch of bare ground. In the western corners of the site are small pockets of tall ruderal plants. Aerial photographs suggest a depression containing water ephemerally/seasonally, though this was not evident on the survey.

The old sports ground area is now an area of neutral grassland, part of which is a designated SLINC. Along the eastern boundary there is an overgrown intact hedge, which leads onto a defunct PedunculateOak (*Quercus robur*) and Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) hedge along the northern boundary. Acid grassland has been noted here previously and the Wavy Hair-grass (*Deschampsia flexuosa*) noted during this survey may be an indicator of this. The area has a number of fenced enclosures which are grazed by horses, goats and geese.

## Habitats

Phase 1 Name	Scrub – dense/ bramble/ scattered	Phase 1 Code	A21/ A21Rf/ A22
--------------	-----------------------------------	--------------	-----------------

The majority of scrub on the site is found at the northern end, where there is a large patch of dense Willow scrub in the centre. This area also contains a goose enclosure. Adjoining this is a slightly larger area of scattered scrub. A small area of dense Goat Willow (*Salix caprea*) and Hawthorn (*Corylus avellana*) scrub is found next to the western boundary of the site.

At the southern end of the site there is a Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*) tree, with a small area of Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) scrub.

Phase 1 Name	Neutral Grassland	Phase 1 Code	B2
--------------	-------------------	--------------	----

A large open grassland covers the majority of the site. This was once used as a sports ground and is currently it is grazed by horses, goats and geese, leaving the sward height very low. A large section along the northern, southern and narrow eastern margins of this habitat is a designated SLINC.

The vegetation consists of Crested Dogs-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*), Yorkshire Fog (*Holcus lanatus*) and Common Bent grass (*Agrostis capillaris*) with a scattering of Cats Ear (*Hypochaeris radicata*) throughout and other hay meadow species such as Sweet Vernal-grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*), Common Bird's-foot Trefoil and Ribwort Plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*). Wavy Hair-grass (*Deschampsia flexuosa*), a potential indicator of more acidic ground and a Birmingham and Black Country axiophyte is also found here. The grassland also contains a number of ruderal/bare ground species, potentially due to over-grazing. These include species recorded as Rare such as Common Cudweed (*Filago vulgaris*).

Phase 1 Name	Tall ruderal	Phase 1 Code	C31
--------------	--------------	--------------	-----

There are two patches of tall ruderal on this site. One patch is situated in the north-western corner and comprises of Nettles (*Urtica dioica*) and other tall herb. The second patch of tall ruderal is found in the south-western corner and consists of Nettles and False Oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*).

Phase 1 Name	Hedge – intact/defunct	Phase 1 Code	J21/ J22
--------------	------------------------	--------------	----------

An overgrown intact hedge runs along the eastern side of the site. Tree species within the hedge include Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Willow (*Salix* sp.), Pedunculate Oak and Elder (*Sambucus nigra*). There is also a large Hybrid Black-poplar (*Populus nigra x deltoides* = *P. x canadensis*) standard at the southern end of this hedge. Bramble forms the field layer and a small amount of Male-fern (*Dryopteris filix-mas*) is also present.

On the northern end of the site the hedge comprises of Pedunculate Oak and Hazel with Hybrid Crack Willow (*S. x fragilis*), Hawthorn and Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*).

The southern boundary is on a bank and consists of a few scattered trees and shrubs, including a Lilac (*Syringa vulgaris*) tree.

Notes
-------

## Habitats of Note [1]

Phase 1 Name	Phase 1 Code	EHD	BAP	NERC	Rarity	Year Recorded
Hedgerow	J2		UKBAP, LBAP			2018

Notes
-------

## Species of Note [1]

Flora								
Species	Statutory	BA P	NERC	RL	Rarity	Axiophyte	Year Recorded	
<i>Deschampsia flexuosa</i>	Wavy Hair-grass				R		2018	
<i>Erysimum cheiranthoides</i>	Treacle-Mustard				R		2018	
<i>Filago vulgaris</i>	Common Cudweed				R	BBCF_Ax	2018	

Notes								
Fauna								
Species		Statutory	BAP	NERC	RL	Concern	Rarity	Year Recorded
<i>Apus apus</i>	Swift					Amber		1989
<i>Linaria cannabina</i>	Linnet		UKBAP	Sect.41		Red		1989
<i>Passer domesticus</i>	House Sparrow		UKBAP	Sect.41		Red		1989
<i>Prunella modularis</i>	Dunnock		UKBAP	Sect.41		Amber		1988
<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Starling		UKBAP	Sect.41		Red		1989
<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	Song Thrush		LBAP, UKBAP	Sect.41		Red		1989
Notes								

#### Site/Habitat Suitability for Other Species of Note (not recorded during the survey)

Description/Notes	There is the potential for the site to be used by bats as foraging habitat. There are a couple of large trees on along the hedgerow that may provide roosting sites for bats. The hedgerows and scrub provide cover for a range of bird species and the grassland and tall herb provides food.
-------------------	--

#### Invasive Species [2]

Species	Location	Abundance (DAFOR)	Year Recorded
Notes			

#### Geology

Solid/Drift Formation	Clent Formation And Enville Formation (undifferentiated) - Mudstone And Sandstone.
Description	Sedimentary Bedrock formed approximately 272 to 310 million years ago in the Permian and Carboniferous Periods.
Features of Value	
1	None recorded.

#### Soils

Neutral - based on plant species assemblage.
--

#### Public Access & Site Usage

Land Use	Private land
Access Level	No access
Access Type(s)	Private access only

#### Comparison with Previous Survey(s) Results

Two previous LS surveys have been carried out on this site in 1989 and 2000. Since the 1989 survey there have been some changes in the dominant plant species in the grassland area. This was previously described as slightly acidic, consisting mostly of Red Fescue ( <i>Festuca rubra</i> ) with occasional Common Bent, Creeping Bent and Yorkshire Fog. Today the abundant species are Crested Dog's-tail, Yorkshire Fog and Common Bent. Suggestions for improvement were made in previous surveys but it appears no/little changes were made.
---

#### Boundary (notes)

The rationale for this survey was to re-survey the SLINC as part of the Black Country Call for Sites process. There is an adjoining area of public open space that could be surveyed for its wildlife value.
---

#### Summary of Assessment

Grassy Lane has a variety of habitats which support a range of wildlife. Its social value is predominantly low due to lack of public access. It has aesthetic value to the adjoining houses, though this could be increased by the removal of waste at the entrance and a reduction in grazing intensity. The site also acts as a stepping stone in the network of designated sites across the area. However, the site has decreased in quality due to over-grazing and also through the dumping of rubbish, therefore when assessed against the Birmingham and Black Country Local Sites Selection Criteria, the site does not meet the threshold for its status a Site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation (SLINC).
---

Recommendations (including further survey & site management/enhancement)	
1	A reduction in grazing would improve sward height. Species diversity could also be improved by green hay strewing, potentially from the nearby Kitchen Lane meadow.
2	Removal of the rubbish from the northern entrance
3	Plant up the gaps of the northern boundary hedge could improve the value of the hedge as barrier (for site owner) and also improve its connectivity for wildlife.
4	Plant a hedge along southern and western boundary

Data Sources		
	Source	Date
Species and Habitat Data Source(s)	The Wildlife Trust for Birmingham and the Black Country, 2018. EcoRecord data search 2018.	2018
Geological Data Source(s)	British Geological Society 1:50,000 bedrock & superficial deposits GIS web map services from BGS website: <a href="https://www.bgs.ac.uk/data/services/mash-ups/desktopgis.html">https://www.bgs.ac.uk/data/services/mash-ups/desktopgis.html</a>	2018
Historic Data Sources(s)	Ordnance Survey mapping, 1880s County Series – current, Black Country Historic Landscape Characterisation (2010)	2018
Assessment Author and Organisation	The Wildlife Trust for Birmingham and the Black Country.	10/12/2018

## [1] HABITATS/SPECIES OF NOTE TABLES – ATTRIBUTE DEFINITIONS

### STATUTORY (PROTECTED) -

**EHD** = EU Habitats Directive (plus where relevant the Annexe II or IV). **PBA** = Protection of Badgers Act 1992.

**WCA S1** = Wildlife & Countryside Act Schedule 1 (birds protected at all times). **WCA S5** = Wildlife & Countryside Act Schedule 5 (animals with various levels of protection). **WCA S8** = Wildlife & Countryside Act Schedule 8 (higher and lower plants with various levels of protection).

**BAP** – Habitats/Species included on latest UK BAP list of Priority Habitats/Species.

**NERC P.I.** - Habitats/Species included on current list of Principal Importance in England under Section 41 of the NERC Act (2006 or amended).

**RL** - Species included on Global IUCN & British Red Lists (Red Data Books).

**RARITY (HABITATS) - BIRMINGHAM & BLACK COUNTRY** - Habitats included on the B&BC list of locally rare habitats (administered by EcoRecord).

**RARITY (FLORA SPECIES) - BIRMINGHAM & BLACK COUNTRY** - (based on data held and managed by EcoRecord).

**VR** = Very Rare - a species present in less than 1.0% of 1Km squares, tetrads, or 5Km squares in B&BC.

**R** = Rare - a species present in 1.0% - 4.3% of 1Km squares, tetrads, or 5Km squares in B&BC.

**U** = Uncommon - a species present in 4.3% - 12% of 1Km squares, tetrads or 5Km squares in B&BC.

**AXIOPHYTE** - included on the Birmingham & the Black Country list of axiophytes.

### CONCERN (FAUNA SPECIES OF CONSERVATION CONCERN) -

Birds: **R** = Red List - species that are Globally Threatened according to the International Union for Nature Conservation criteria; those whose population or range has declined rapidly in recent years; and those that have declined historically and not shown a substantial recent recovery. **A** = Amber List - species with an unfavourable conservation status in Europe; those whose population or range has declined moderately in recent years; those whose population has declined historically but made a substantial recent recovery; rare breeders; and those with internationally important or localised populations.

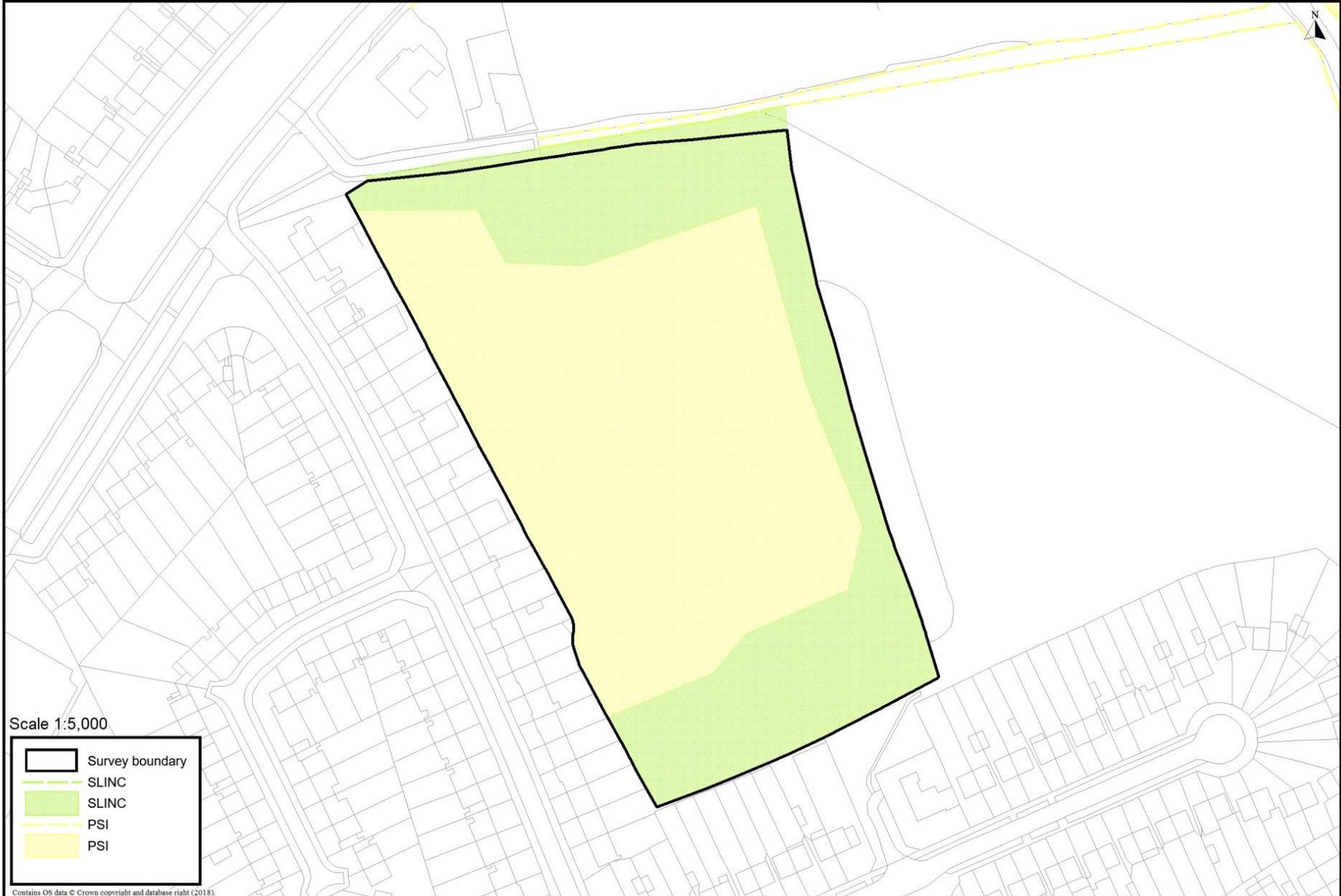
Mammals: **ND** = National Decline and **ED** = England Decline as measured by the Mammal Societies Table of Recent Population Changes in the Native Species of Land Mammals.

Invertebrates: **RD** = Regional Decline identified in Butterfly Conservation West Midlands Regional Action Plan.

**YEAR** - The most recent year the species has been recorded.

**[2] Species listed on Schedule 9 part 1 (animals) and part 2 (plants) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended** - this lists animals which may not be released or allowed to escape into the wild and plants which may not be planted or otherwise caused to grow in the wild.

# Map 1: Grassy Lane Current & Recommended Designation



## Map 2: Grassy Lane



## Site Photographs



Figure 1: The large Poplar tree in the south-eastern end of the site.



Figure 2: View of site from Grassy Lane.

## Species Records

### FLORA

#### Grassland

Scientific Name	Common Name
<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	Sycamore
<i>Agrostis capillaris</i>	Common Bent
<i>Anisantha sterilis</i>	Barren Brome
<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>	Sweet Vernal-grass
<i>Aphanes arvensis</i>	Parsley-piert
<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>	False Oat-grass
<i>Artemisia absinthium</i>	Wormwood
<i>Betula pendula</i>	Silver Birch
<i>Bromus hordeaceus</i> subsp. <i>hordeaceus</i>	Common Soft-brome
<i>Capsella bursa-pastoris</i>	Shepherd's-purse
<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>	Common Mouse-ear
<i>Chenopodium album</i>	Fat-hen
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Creeping Thistle
<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	Spear Thistle
<i>Corylus avellana</i>	Hazel
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn
<i>Crepis capillaris</i>	Smooth Hawk's-beard
<i>Cynosurus cristatus</i>	Crested Dog's-tail
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	Cock's-foot
<i>Deschampsia flexuosa</i>	Wavy Hair-grass
<i>Equisetum arvense</i>	Field Horsetail
<i>Erysimum cheiranthoides</i>	Treacle-mustard
<i>Festuca rubra</i>	Red Fescue
<i>Filago vulgaris</i>	Common Cudweed
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	Ash
<i>Hedera helix</i>	Ivy
<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	Hogweed
<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire-fog
<i>Holcus mollis</i>	Creeping Soft-grass
<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>	Cat's-ear
<i>Laburnum anagyroides</i>	Laburnum
<i>Lamium album</i>	White Dead-nettle
<i>Lathyrus pratensis</i>	Meadow Vetchling
<i>Linaria vulgaris</i>	Common Toadflax
<i>Lolium perenne</i>	Perennial Rye-grass
<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>	Common Bird's-foot-trefoil
<i>Matricaria discoidea</i>	Pineappleweed
<i>Papaver rhoeas</i>	Common Poppy
<i>Phleum pratense</i>	Timothy
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort Plantain
<i>Plantago major</i>	Greater Plantain
<i>Poa trivialis</i>	Rough Meadow-grass
<i>Polygonum aviculare</i>	Knotgrass
<i>Populus nigra</i> x <i>deltoides</i> = <i>P. x canadensis</i>	Hybrid Black-poplar

<i>Potentilla anserina</i>	Silverweed
<i>Potentilla reptans</i>	Creeping Cinquefoil
<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	Blackthorn
<i>Quercus robur</i>	Pedunculate Oak
<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	Meadow Buttercup
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Creeping Buttercup
<i>Reseda luteola</i>	Weld
<i>Rosa canina</i>	Dog-rose
<i>Rubus fruticosus agg.</i>	Bramble
<i>Rumex crispus</i>	Curled Dock
<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	Broad-leaved Dock
<i>Salix</i>	Willow
<i>Salix euxina x alba = S. x fragilis</i>	Hybrid Crack-willow
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	Elder
<i>Scorzoneroideis autumnalis</i>	Autumn Hawkbit
<i>Syringa vulgaris</i>	Lilac
<i>Taraxacum officinale agg.</i>	Dandelion
<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	Red Clover
<i>Trifolium repens</i>	White Clover
<i>Tripleurospermum inodorum</i>	Scentless Mayweed
<i>Ulex europaeus</i>	Gorse
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Common Nettle

### Hedgerow

Scientific Name	Common Name
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Creeping Thistle
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn
<i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i>	Male-fern
<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	Blackthorn
<i>Quercus robur</i>	Pedunculate Oak
<i>Rubus fruticosus agg.</i>	Bramble
<i>Salix</i>	Willow
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	Elder
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Common Nettle

### FAUNA

#### Whole Site

Scientific Name	Common Name
<i>Columba palumbus</i>	Woodpigeon
<i>Corvus corone</i>	Carrion Crow
<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Wren
<i>Turdus merula</i>	Blackbird
<i>Pararge aegeria tircis</i>	Speckled Wood
<i>Polyommatus icarus icarus</i>	Common Blue
<i>Pieris</i>	a white butterfly
<i>Bombus (Thoracombus) pascuorum</i>	Common Carder Bee
<i>Vespula</i>	a wasp
<i>Orthoptera</i>	a cricket or grasshopper
<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>	Red Fox