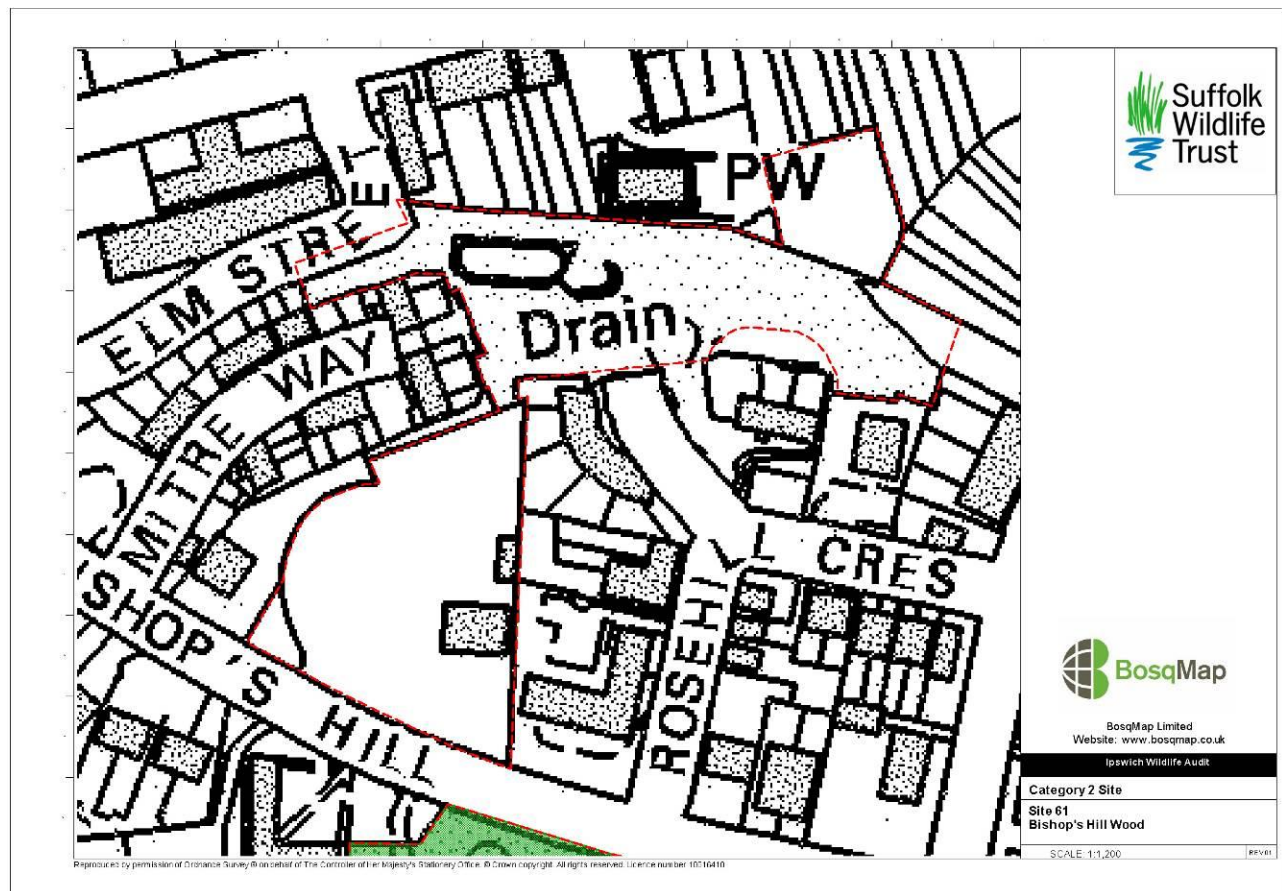


Site name

Site reference 61 – Bishops Hill Wood

IBC Ref: W25
Site status: No wildlife designation
Grid ref: TM 17583 43892
Area: 1.08 hectares
Date: 21 August 2013
Recorder: A Looser
Weather conditions: Sunny 27°C
Ranking: 4
Biodiversity value: Medium

Map:



Photos:



Looking north across site



Scrubby area at southern end

Habitat type(s):

Broadleaf woodland

Subsidiary habitats:

-

Site description:

This site is a small area of woodland on a steep slope located just north of Bishops Hill. Access was not obtained to this site so it was only surveyed from the boundary. The map shows a pond in the middle of the site but this could not be seen. Part of the site appeared to be private garden and this was not surveyed.

Protected species:

.-

Protected species potential:

Bats

BAP habitats present:

-

BAP species seen:

-

BAP species known:

-

BAP species potential:

Bats

Stag beetles

Toads

Hedgehog

Connectivity:

The site is north of Holywells Park CWS (Site 10) and is also close to Back Hamlet Allotments (Site 56).

Structural diversity:

The structural diversity was fairly poor for this habitat type but does provide some structure in an otherwise built up part of the town.

Flora:

The site is woodland. It is dominated by sycamore and holly with ash, ivy, elder, bramble, yew, horse chestnut, oak, larch, pine, beech and buddleia.

There is a small strip at the western end which contains elder, buddleia, bramble, sycamore, ash, raspberries and hedge bindweed.

Avifauna:

This site provides good foraging, roosting and nesting opportunities for a range of common bird species and a good variety are likely to be present.

Invertebrates

Lots of butterflies and bees were seen on the buddleia and bramble along the western strip including

peacock and small white butterflies. A range of other common butterflies are likely during the year. Stag beetles could be present if there are areas of subterranean dead wood.

Herpetofauna:

The habitat is unsuitable for reptiles. If the pond is still present it could support amphibians such as newts, frogs and toads.

Mammals:

Common species of mammal such as grey squirrel, fox and mole are likely to use the site. The site also provides good cover for small mammals such as mice and voles. Bats are likely to use the site for foraging and some of the trees may have suitable cracks and crevices to allow roosting opportunities. Hedgehogs may be using the site as part of the overall semi-natural resource of the local area.

Comments and recommendations:

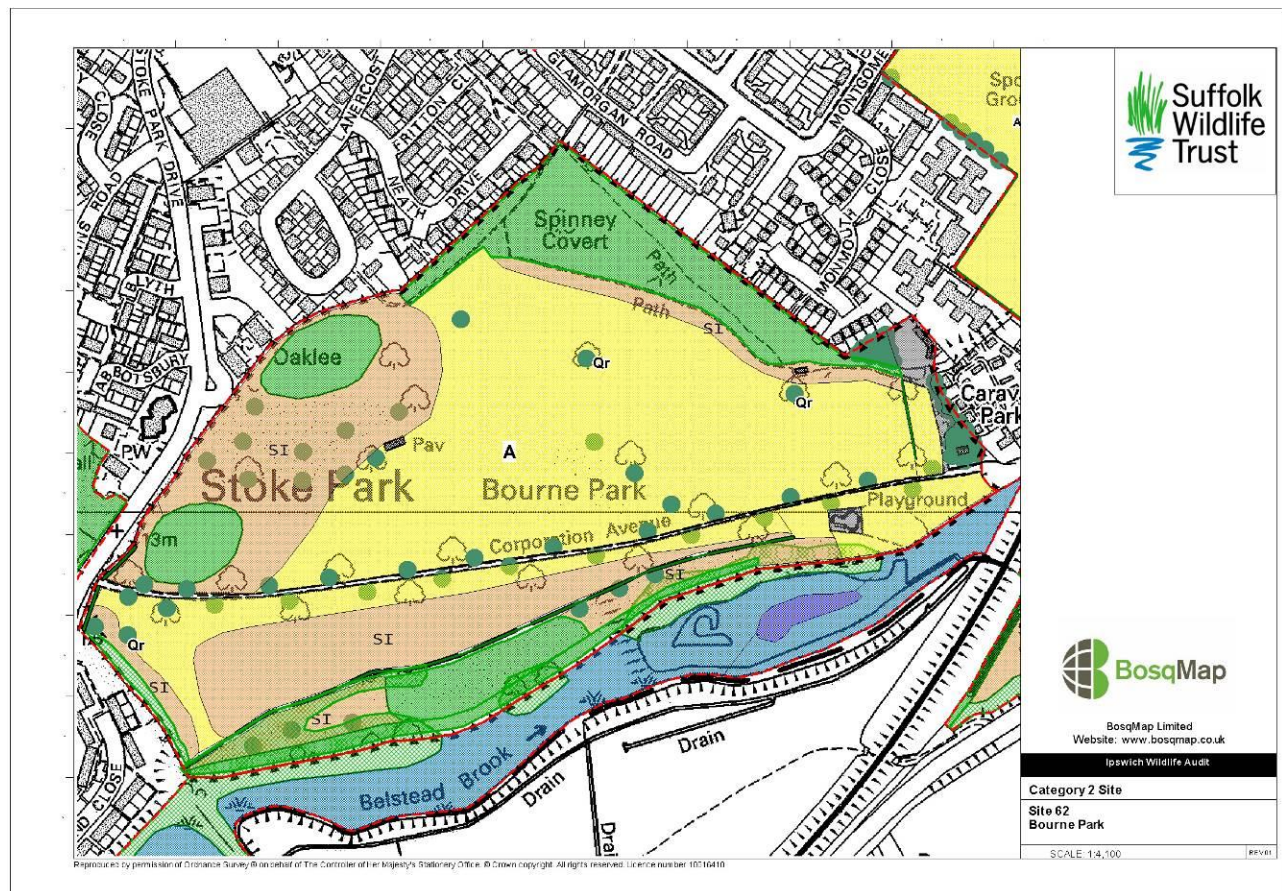
No access was obtained to the interior of the site so the site has no Phase 1 map.

Site name

Site reference 62 – Bourne Park

IBC Ref: W49
Site status: No wildlife designation
Grid ref: TM 15483 42028
Area: 26.15 Hectares
Date: 13 June 2013
Recorder: A Looser
Weather conditions: Overcast, windy 15°C
Ranking: 3
Biodiversity value: Medium

Map:



Photos:



Looking south east across site



Natural regeneration area

Habitat type(s):

Amenity grassland

Subsidiary habitats:

Scattered trees

Species rich hedgerow

Semi-improved grassland

Secondary woodland

Ornamental borders (Arable)

Site description:

This site is a large recreation ground situated along Stoke Park Drive. The site is dominated by amenity grassland with scattered trees. There is a species rich hedgerow running roughly parallel to the southern boundary, and a short section of species poor hedge near the eastern boundary. There are several large areas of longer grass around the boundaries, particularly at the western end of the park. There are several areas along the southern and western boundaries which have been recently planted with a range of native species. There is also an area near the barn owl boxes which appears to have been left to naturally regenerate into woodland. There is an area of broadleaf woodland along the north-eastern boundary and a wooded strip along part of the southern boundary. There are two play areas, one in the south-east of the park and the other near the pavilion in the centre of the park.

Protected species:

Pipistrelle bat (2012)

Protected species potential:

Slow worm, lizard and grass snake

BAP habitats present:

-

BAP species seen:

Starlings

Song Thrush

Dunnock

BAP species known:

Hedgehog

Stag Beetle (1997)

Dot Moth, Latticed Heath (1998) Oak Hook-Tip

BAP species potential:

Slow worm, lizard and grass snake

Connectivity:

This site is very well connected to the south. It lies north of Bourne Park Reedbed CWS (Site 5). The railway line also passes very close to the eastern edge of the site which provides additional connectivity. Fishpond Covert (CWS Site 19) lies to the west beyond Stoke Park Drive and the site is also close to Glamorgan Road Green Area (Site 90), Montgomery Sports Ground (Site 106) and Halifax Road Maidenhall Allotments (Site 92).

Structural diversity:

The site has very good structural diversity with amenity grassland, longer grass, young trees, hedgerows and mature trees.

Flora:

The majority of the site is short mown amenity grassland. Species in this include rye grass with clover, dandelion, daisy, yarrow, greater plantain and ribwort plantain. The areas of longer grass contain a greater diversity of species including rye grass, cocksfoot, Yorkshire fog, rough meadow grass and wall barley with hairy sedge, creeping thistle, hogweed, nettle, cleavers, broad-leaved dock, creeping buttercup, cut-leaved cranesbill, common mouse ear, black medick, germander speedwell and lesser stitchwort.

The area of longer grass at the southern end of the park, near the area of natural regeneration is more species rich with additional species including meadow foxtail, red fescue, sweet vernal grass with meadow buttercup, sorrel, common vetch, bush vetch, birds foot trefoil, burdock, silver weed, hoary ragwort, green alkanet, pignut and dittander (a nationally scarce species).

There is a row of mature trees along Corporation Avenue. This is dominated by oak, but also includes chestnut, lime, beech and copper beech. Other standard trees include walnut, alder, ash, poplar and willow.

Spinney Covert is also dominated by oak with chestnut, sycamore and ash. The understorey contains hazel, hawthorn and field maple.

The hedge near the southern boundary is dominated by hawthorn, with cherry, oak, elder, elm (some of which is dead), silver birch, bramble and lime.

The scrub along Stoke Park drive has a good variety of species including hazel, beech, hornbeam, sycamore, oak, scots pine, cherry, ash, hawthorn, elder, field maple and bramble.

The woodland strip along the southern boundary is diverse with oak, ivy, elder, hazel, hawthorn, blackthorn, ash, sweet chestnut, sycamore, bramble, larch, lime, cherry, copper beech, dog rose, gorse and poplar.

The trees which have been recently planted in several areas around the site are a good range of native species including hawthorn, rowan, field maple, silver birch and hazel.

Avifauna:

This site provides excellent foraging, roosting and nesting opportunities for a range of bird species and a good number of species were observed during the visit. These include blackbird, wood pigeon, blue tit, great tit, carrion crow, magpie, robin, jay and green woodpecker. In addition starlings, song thrush and dunnock which are all BAP species were also observed. In addition two barn owl boxes are present on site.

Invertebrates:

This site contains a sizeable area of longer grass. This provides good nectar sources for a range of butterfly species and despite the weather being poor for recording this group small white, meadow brown, ringlet and small skipper were all seen. This is likely to be a good site for them. This habitat will also be home to a good variety of moth species and several BAP moths have been recorded on site.

The longer grass also provides good habitat for a range of other insects including bees, wasps, hoverflies and spiders. Stag beetle has been recorded at this site and they are likely to be present in any subterranean dead wood. The dead tree on site will provide habitat for a range of invertebrate species. The mature trees will also support good numbers of invertebrate species, particularly the oak trees.

Herpetofauna:

The areas of longer grass provide suitable habitat for reptiles. Due to the proximity of the railway line and the large area of reed bed to the south it is possible that reptiles could be present. Slow worm and common lizard have been recorded on the allotments to the north (Site 92).

Mammals:

Common species of mammal such as grey squirrel will permanently occupy the site. A number of mole hills were observed indicating that moles are resident. The areas of longer grass provide good habitat for a range of small mammals including mice, voles and shrews. Previous surveys have found bank voles and wood mice and a pygmy shrew was seen during the visit. There are records of hedgehogs from this site and the habitat is suitable for them so they are still likely to be present. A sign near the dead tree at the western end of the park states that bat surveys have been carried out and bats have been recorded roosting in the tree although this information is not on the SBRC database. Bats are also likely to use the mature trees on site, particularly the oak trees. There is a record for pipistrelle bats at The Lodge (2012).

Comments and recommendations:

This is a large park that is well connected to other sites of high wildlife value. It therefore represents an important area of green space on the southern edge of the Town.

The large tracts of un-mown grassland are extremely valuable for invertebrates. Mowing of such areas should be on rotation, to ensure that there are always tussocky areas remaining as an overwintering refuge for invertebrates.

A rough grass/short grass mosaic combined with woodland is ideal for hedgehog and bramble should be allowed to develop in the vicinity of the woodland strip, to increase hibernating opportunities. Similarly, leaving some areas of grass to grow on to become more tussocky will help provide summer refuges for this species, but care needs to be taken during any episodes of cutting. Late autumn/winter cutting of these grassland areas will avoid animals being injured as they are more likely to hibernate under brambles or in woodland where there are fallen leaves from trees for them to construct their winter nests.

From a floristic point of view, the removal of cuttings is always advised to promote a species-rich sward and to encourage less competitive plant species.

Site name

Site reference 63 - Bramford Lane Allotments

IBC Ref: W111
Site status: No wildlife designation
Grid ref: TM 14425 46116
Area: 7.87 Hectares
Date: 30 May 2013
Recorder: S Bullion
Weather conditions: Cold and overcast 14°C
Ranking: 4
Biodiversity value: Medium

Map:



Photos:



View showing extensive scrub/fruit belt in the distance

Habitat type(s):

Scrub, species-poor rough grassland, short mown grass, cultivated areas

Subsidiary habitats:

Species-rich hedgerows, fruit trees, ponds

Site description:

These allotments were formerly larger but approximately ten years ago site the western part of the site was designated as Bramford Lane Open Space (Site 64) and new hedgerows were planted along the western boundary to separate the two sites. The allotments are subdivided by lines of mature fruit trees, bushes and bramble scrub and these form good corridors through the site. The plots are well used and divided by short mown paths, but there are some plots which have been designated for wildlife and allowed to become 'wild'. An elm hedge demarcates the eastern boundary.

Protected species:

Slow worm reported by allotment holder

Protected species potential:

-

BAP habitats present:

-

BAP species seen:

House sparrow

Starling

Song thrush

BAP species known:

Hedgehog and slow worm reported by allotment holder

White letter hairstreak butterfly reported by allotment holder

BAP species potential:

Stag beetle, toad

Connectivity:

The site is part of a wider block including the adjacent Bramford Lane Open Space.

Structural diversity:

The combination of rough grassland areas and scrub with fruit trees provides excellent structural diversity.

Flora:

Rough grassland and areas bordering the hedgerows areas included cock's foot, false oat grass, cow parsley, daisy, dandelion, creeping buttercup, cleavers, green alkanet, ground elder, alexanders and nettle.

A mature elm hedge runs along the eastern boundary, with occasional elm elsewhere. The planted western boundary has a double mixed-species hedge with hazel, field maple, dog rose, hawthorn, blackthorn, elder and bramble. Throughout the allotments are fruit trees with varieties of plums, gages and bullace, with small copses of hawthorn and blackthorn (sloe). Bramble is also present throughout the site.

Avifauna:

The grassland/scrub/fruit tree mosaic is superb for birds. A large flock of starlings (20+) was seen foraging within the allotments (also seen later on the adjacent Bramford Lane Open Space). House sparrows, greenfinch, chaffinch and blackbird were recorded and green wood pecker and sparrowhawk were also reported by an allotment holder. One of the wildlife areas has bird boxes to improve opportunities for hole-nesting birds.

Invertebrates:

The time of year and temperature was unsuitable for recording this group. Stag beetle larvae may be present if there is subterranean deadwood arising from old fruit trees. The mature elm hedge is reported to support white-letter hairstreak butterflies.

Herpetofauna:

Slow worms have been seen by an allotment holder, although a survey in 2011 on the adjacent open space was surprisingly negative. The small ponds on individual allotment holders support good numbers of tadpoles and the allotment habitat will be excellent for frogs and toads.

Mammals:

The rough grassland and bramble will support a range of small mammals such as mice, voles and shrews. Grey squirrel, muntjac deer and foxes are known and the site provides excellent foraging and hibernation habitat for the declining populations of hedgehog which has been observed in spring 2013.

Comments and recommendations:

The site offers a good mosaic of habitats whilst retaining its primary function as allotments. The lines of bramble scrub and mature fruit trees combined with long grass areas are key to maintaining a wildlife interest on this site, so these habitats should be retained and safeguarded.

Site name

Site reference 64 - Bramford Lane Open Space

IBC Ref: New
Site status: No wildlife designation
Grid ref: TM 14236 46156
Area: 5.2 hectares
Date: 30 May 2013
Recorder: S Bullion
Weather conditions: Cold and overcast 12°C
Ranking: 3
Biodiversity value: Medium

Map:



Photo:



Grassland and scrub mosaic

Habitat type(s):

Scrub, species-poor rough grassland

Subsidiary habitats:

Species-rich planted hedgerows

Site description:

The site lies to the west of the Bramford Lane Allotments (Site 63) and was formerly part of the allotment. Approximately ten years ago the allotments were reduced in size and new hedgerows were planted along the eastern boundary to separate the two sites. The site is now informal public open space with areas of blackthorn and bramble scrub interspersed with rough grassland and occasional fruit trees originating from the allotment. There is a central, well defined path with grassy paths leading off and around the perimeter, kept open by trampling pressure and well used by dog walkers. An area of play equipment is situated near the road frontage and another area of hardstanding for basketball towards the centre of the site.

Protected species:

.-

Protected species potential:

Common lizard and slow worm

BAP habitats present:

-

BAP species seen:

House sparrow

Starling

Song thrush

BAP species known:

-

BAP species potential:

Common lizard and slow worm

Stag beetle

Hedgehog

Connectivity:

The site is part of a wider block including the adjacent Bramford Lane Allotments (Site 63), although the combined sites are isolated from any functional wildlife corridor.

Structural diversity:

The scrub/rough grassland mosaic provides excellent structural diversity.

Flora:

The rough grassland, although species-poor, provides important habitat for foraging birds. Species recorded include cock's foot, perennial rye grass, soft brome, barren brome, cow parsley, hogweed, daisy, dandelion, black medick, white clover, red clover, bush vetch, mugwort, meadow buttercup, creeping buttercup, yarrow, goat's beard and occasional creeping thistle and nettle. Evidence of the former allotment history is present by species such as horseradish, Spanish bluebell and valerian in the sward.

The grassland is interspersed with patches of scrub, dominated by blackthorn and bramble and one patch of broom. Occasional apple, walnut and plum trees are a relic of the former allotment usage. The road frontage and eastern boundary have mixed-species hedges with hazel, field maple, dog rose, hawthorn and bramble. Rowan was present on the western boundary.

Avifauna:

The grassland/scrub mosaic is superb for birds. A large flock of starlings (20+) was seen foraging as well as small numbers of house sparrows. Chiffchaff, whitethroat, song thrush, greenfinch, chaffinch and blackbird were also heard.

Invertebrates:

The time of year and temperature was unsuitable for recording this group. Stag beetle larvae may be present if there is subterranean deadwood arising from old fruit trees. The grassland/bramble mosaic should support a good range of invertebrates, including butterflies.

Herpetofauna:

A reptile survey took place in 2011 and was negative, which is surprising given that the habitat is ideal for this group and that slow worms are reported as being on the adjacent allotment.

Mammals:

The rough grassland will support a range of small mammals such as mice, voles and shrews. Grey squirrel, and muntjac deer are observed on the adjacent allotments and the site provides excellent foraging and hibernation habitat for the declining populations of hedgehog (also seen on the allotments).

Comments and recommendations:

Rotational management of scrub habitat would be beneficial to ensure that a scrub/grassland mosaic is maintained.

Site name

Site reference 65 – Bramford Lane Recreation Ground

IBC Ref: W50
Site status: No wildlife designation
Grid ref: TM 13445 46075
Area: 5.93 hectares
Date: 01 August 2013
Recorder: A Looser
Weather conditions: Hot and Sunny 28°C
Ranking: 4
Biodiversity value: Low

Map:

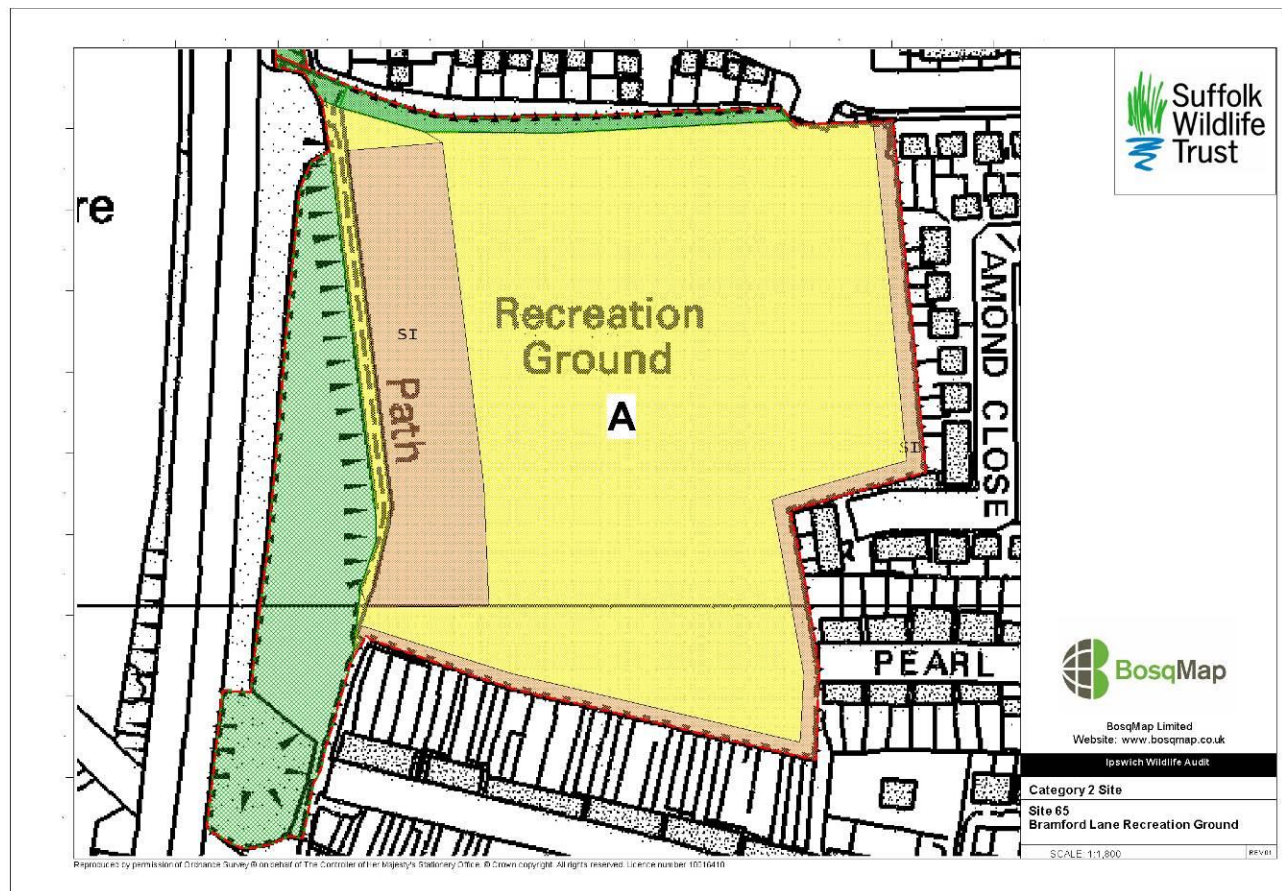


Photo:



Looking north along western boundary

Habitat type(s):

Amenity grassland

Subsidiary habitats:

Scrub, semi-improved grassland, species rich hedgerow

Site description:

This site is a small recreation ground situated along Lovetofts Drive. The site is fenced all around. The site is amenity grassland with a section of scrub along the western boundary. There is a small strip of longer grass next to the scrub along the western boundary, and a hedgerow along the northern boundary. There is a large play area in the middle of the site.

Protected species:

Slow worms (2011)

Protected species potential:

-

BAP habitats present:

-

BAP species seen:

-

BAP species known:

Slow worms

BAP species potential:

Hedgehog

Connectivity:

The site is adjacent to the A14 (western boundary) which provides good connectivity for many species. It is also part of a line of sites running along the A14 corridor including Lovetofts Open Space (Site 103) and the rough grassland area associated with land to the south of Bramford Road (Site 41).

Structural diversity:

The site has fairly poor structural diversity with mainly amenity grassland, although the western boundary provides some structural diversity.

Flora:

The majority of the site is short mown amenity grassland. Species in this include rye grass with ribwort plantain, dandelion, white clover, mallow and yarrow. In the area of longer grass along the western boundary there is also cocksfoot, false oat, wall barley, smaller cats tail and common bent with nettle, field bindweed, hogweed, red dead nettle, ragwort, upright hedge parsley, black knapweed, shepherds purse and spear thistle.

The scrub on the western boundary was composed of cherry, oak, field maple, hawthorn, blackthorn, rowan, ash, aspen, bramble, elm and silver birch.

The thin woodland belt along the northern boundary contained blackthorn, elm (including some dead), hazel, field maple and bramble.

Avifauna:

This scrub and trees along the western and northern boundary provide some habitat for a range of common bird species and blackbird and blue tit were observed during the visit. In addition house sparrows were seen along the northern boundary, which are BAP species.

Invertebrates:

The scrub and area of longer grass provide some nectar sources for a range of butterfly species and small white, meadow brown and peacock butterflies were all seen during the visit.

Herpetofauna:

Approximately 200 slow worms have been released onto this site following a translocation. Eight hibernacula have been built along the western and northern edges of the site. However at the current time there is not sufficient habitat to support this number of animals.

Mammals:

Common species of mammal such as grey squirrel are likely to use the site. As the site is adjacent to the A14 it is likely a variety of mammals utilize the site. The scrub and long grass provides good habitat for small mammals. The site also provides good foraging opportunities for hedgehogs. It is unknown whether bats will forage along the tree belt bordering the A14.

Comments and recommendations:

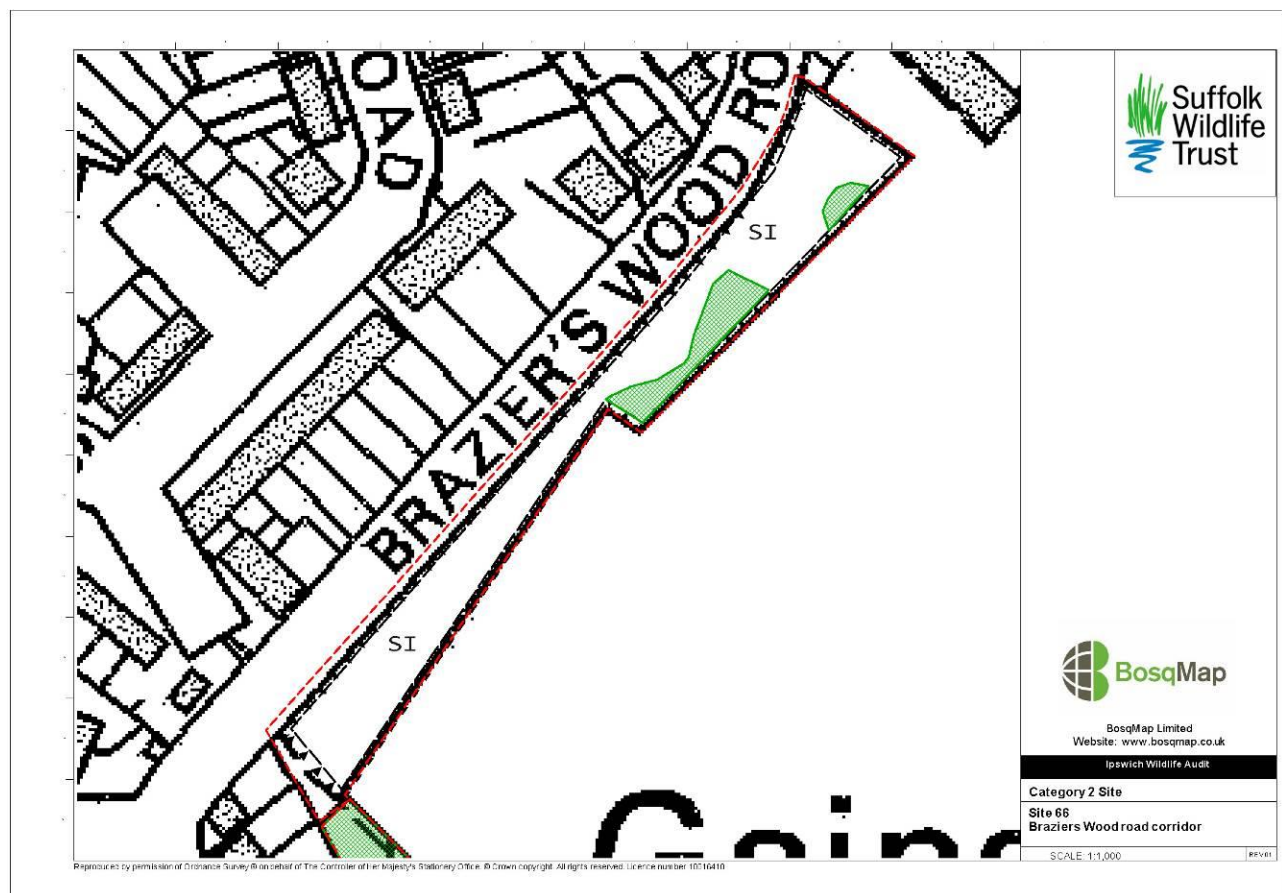
Extending the area of longer grass on the western boundary will provide more habitat for reptiles, birds and mammals. In addition some of the longer grass bordering the scrub should remain uncut to allow the grass to develop a better structure. A management plan should include managing these long-grass areas on rotation so there is always a tussocky rough grassland resource and this will be beneficial to hedgehogs as well as reptiles.

Site name

Site reference 66 – Braziers Wood Road Corridor

IBC ref: NEW
Site status: No wildlife designation
Grid ref: TM 18654 41684
Area: 0.37 hectares
Date: 7 September 2012
Recorder: A Looser
Weather conditions: Hot and sunny 28°C
Ranking: 5, but with the potential to increase
Biodiversity value: Low

Map:



Photos:



View south-westwards

Habitat type(s):

Poor semi-improved grassland

Subsidiary habitats:

Scrub

Site description:

The site is a linear area of recently cut grass with occasional scrub to the east of Braziers Wood Road. The area was surrounded by a fence at the time of survey so full access was not possible, but the narrowness of this site meant that all areas were visible from the road. Beyond the eastern boundary construction for the Ipswich Academy was in progress and the site lies within the development boundary and is included within future landscaping works.

Protected species:

Common lizard (not present now)

Protected species potential:

-

BAP habitats present:

-

BAP species seen:

-

BAP species known:

Common lizard (not present now)

BAP species potential:

-

Connectivity:

Beyond Braziers Wood Road are residential properties. The area to the east was heavily disturbed bare earth at the time of survey. As this is a linear strip, there is the potential to improve connectivity in the future as it links with Braziers Wood, Meadow and Carr County Wildlife Site (CWS) on its southern boundary, but this will be dependent upon how the landscaping for the development scheme is implemented.

Structural diversity:

The site consists of short grass with occasional scrub, so it currently has poor structural diversity.

Flora:

Most of the site had been recently cut and raked off. In the few uncut areas next to the fencing common species were recorded including Yorkshire fog, red fescue, false oat-grass, cocksfoot, common bent, mallow, red clover, ribwort plantain, common ragwort, Canadian fleabane, fat hen, yarrow and nettle. This is currently a grass-dominated sward.

There were also two small patches of bramble and broom.

Avifauna:

No birds were observed during the visit, however the time of year was sub-optimal for undertaking a full survey for this group. Some common bird species are likely to have utilised the small patches of scrub for nesting and roosting and the grassland will provide some foraging opportunities.

Invertebrates:

No butterflies were seen during the visit. The habitat is not suitable for this group although there may be some invertebrate species in the areas of longer grass. Future management could improve this area for invertebrates.

Herpetofauna:

The habitat is not suitable for this group at the current time. In 2011, surveys undertaken by consultant ecologists TEP recorded a 'good' population of common lizards on site. The report states that these would be encouraged to leave the site passively, by degrading the habitat over a period of time (spring/summer 2012). The mitigation scheme proposes the creation of some replacement habitat in the south-western corner of the Academy site, as well as additional habitat on the south-eastern edge of the development boundary.

Mammals:

Currently unsuitable for this group, but small mammals such as mice and voles could be present in future if more cover was available for them.

Comments and recommendations:

The linear nature of this site makes this a potentially important corridor, linking to Braziers Wood, Meadow and Carr CWS in the south. Due to the earlier site clearance as part of the reptile mitigation this site is currently of low biodiversity value. The landscaping scheme for the Ipswich Academy shows a series of subdivided blocks of roadside habitat, sown with grass and wildflower mix with the planting of trees.

Future management should therefore focus on encouraging floristic diversity and managing the sward with an annual cut and removal of arisings, rather than repeated mowing during the grass growing period. A small amount of scrub could be allowed to develop in the south-western corner and managed on rotation to maintain a habitat mosaic.

References:

TEP. 2012. Ipswich Academy: Reptile Mitigation and Method Statement. Version 2.

Site name

Site reference 67 – Broom Hill Park

IBC Ref: W26
Site status: No wildlife designation
Grid ref: TM 15570 45837
Area: 5.07 hectares
Date: 8 August 2013
Recorder: A Looser
Weather conditions: Sunny 23°C
Ranking: 2
Biodiversity value: High

Map:



Photos:



Looking north east across site



Scrubby margin



Woodland area

Habitat type(s):

Acid grassland, mixed semi-natural woodland

Subsidiary habitats:

Bare ground, individual mature pine trees

Site description:

Broom Hill lies to the north of Valley Road and slopes quite steeply uphill to the north, reaching level ground. The site is notable for its acid grassland which occurs across the site beneath scattered, mature pine trees and forming glades and rides within areas of mixed woodland (Target Note). Although the pines are likely to have been planted well over a hundred years ago, they are classified as semi-natural mixed woodland due to the length of time elapsed and the well developed mixed structure. Areas of bare ground provide superb habitat for ground nesting invertebrates and a number of scarce species have been recorded on this site.

Protected species:

.-

Protected species potential:

Slow worm and common lizard

Bats

BAP habitats present:

Lowland acid grassland

BAP species seen:

-

BAP species known:

White Letter Hairstreak (1997)

BAP species potential:

Slow worm and common lizard

Bats

Hedgehog

Stag Beetle

Connectivity:

The site is part of a cluster of sites which are only separated by roads, which collectively provide good connectivity for a range of wildlife. This includes Valley Road Amenity Area (Site 136), Westwood Avenue (Site 137) and Sherrington Road Recreation Ground (Site 123).

Structural diversity:

The site has excellent structural diversity with areas of bare ground, short trampled grass, longer grass, scrub, scattered trees and mixed woodland with scrubby edges.

Flora:

The flora is typical of dry acid grassland with common bent being the dominant grass with abundant sheep sorrel and common cats ear.

Other species recorded include Yorkshire fog, smaller cats tail, rye grass, rough meadow grass, red fescue and cocksfoot with ragwort, creeping buttercup, greater stitchwort, lesser stitchwort, ribwort plantain, greater plantain, ground ivy, broad leafed dock, dandelion, scentless mayweed, smooth sow thistle and hairy sedge. Bracken is present on some slopes.

There is also a good range of tree and shrub species on site. The standard trees were dominated by mature conifers, particularly very large Scots pines with occasional larch and an understory of broadleaf species including oak and elm, with cherry, sycamore, holly, rowan, blackthorn, silver birch, sweet chestnut, hazel, bramble, elder and broom.

Avifauna:

This site provides excellent foraging, nesting and roosting habitat for a range of common bird species and magpie, blue tit, great tit, wood pigeon, green woodpecker, blackbird and sparrowhawk were all seen during the visit.

Invertebrates:

This site provides a good range of nectar sources for butterflies and moths so it is likely to be a very good site for them. A large number of butterflies were observed involving a good variety of common species including meadow brown, gatekeeper, small skipper, small white, green veined white, small copper, common blue, peacock and speckled wood. There are also a number of records of white letter hairstreak for this site which is a BAP species. Several dragonflies were seen foraging over the site. A number of anthills were observed during the visit which indicated the grassland has been undisturbed for a number of years. *Myrmica schenki* ants have recently been observed at the site (2012) and status of these is now nationally scarce. The bare patches of ground provide good habitat for a variety of species of ground nesting bees and wasps. Hairy legged mining bees (nationally notable) have also been recorded in 2012. A number of small holes were seen in the bare patches indicating this is a good

site for burrowing hymenoptera. Dead wood was observed on site which will provide excellent habitat for a range of invertebrate species. There are also several dead tree stumps which provide good subterranean dead wood habitat for stag beetles.

Herpetofauna:

The habitat mosaic on site provides excellent habitat for reptiles, so it is highly likely that common lizard is present and possibly slow worm. Undertaking a survey for this group would be difficult, as deploying refugia would render them vulnerable to disturbance by the high level of public usage. A walk-over survey using binoculars in suitable weather conditions may be a substitute and should pick up basking common lizard, particularly in the spring.

Mammals:

Common species of mammal such as grey squirrel will live permanently on site. The range of habitats also provides good cover for small mammals such as mice, voles and shrews. The habitat is suitable for hedgehogs and there are old records of them in the area so they are likely to be present. There are many mature pine trees with cracks, splits and holes which have the potential to support bat roosts and several bat boxes were seen on the site, although these had been attacked by squirrels.

Comments and recommendations:

The site is notable for the presence of dry acid grassland (BAP habitat) and is one of the few areas of this type of habitat remaining within the Town. Although there are substantial areas of grassland, as the woodland cover is greater than 30% in many areas, the Phase 1 protocol is to map such habitats as woodland and indicate the sizeable rides and glades as a target note.

In addition, this site appears to be very good for invertebrates, particularly butterflies and ground nesting bees and wasps. Although no ground nesting bees or wasps were observed during the visit the number of holes seen suggests there are good numbers present. There are a number of different species associated with this group and further survey work should take place to determine species and how significant this site is for them.

A spring plant survey would yield additional records. A bat survey and a reptile survey could also provide useful records.

It is recommended that this site is considered for County Wildlife Site status, based on its flora and invertebrate community.

Site name

Site reference 68 – Brunswick Road Recreation Ground

IBC Ref: W74
Site status: No wildlife designation
Grid ref: TM 17796 45432
Area: 2.42 hectares
Date: 03 June 2013
Recorder: A Looser
Weather conditions: Sunny 15°C
Ranking: 5
Biodiversity value: Low

Map:



Photos:



View looking north

Habitat type(s):

Amenity grassland, poor semi-improved grassland, species rich hedgerow, species poor hedgerow

Subsidiary habitats:

Scattered trees

Site description:

This site is a small recreation ground situated along Brunswick Road. The site is amenity grassland with scattered trees, with a gappy species poor hedgerow along the western boundary bordering the back gardens. There is a recently planted native species rich hedge along the north western boundary and a small section of older hedge running south from the northern boundary in the western corner. There is a small play area in the centre of the site. The northwestern corner has been left with longer grass. Nine fruit trees have been planted near the western boundary to create a new orchard.

Protected species:

.-

Protected species potential:

Slow worm

BAP habitats present:

-

BAP species seen:

Starlings

BAP species known:

Stag Beetle (1994)

BAP species potential:

Slow worm

Hedgehog

Connectivity:

The site has very poor connectivity as it is surrounded by roads and residential housing.

Structural diversity:

The site has fairly poor structural diversity with mainly amenity grassland and trees, although the hedgerow provides some structural diversity.

Flora:

The majority of the site is short mown amenity grassland. Species in this include rye grass with ribwort plantain, greater plantain, dandelion, daisy, clover, yarrow, dove's foot cranesbill, creeping buttercup and common field speedwell. In the areas around the edges which are left slightly longer there is also green alkanet, nettle, garlic mustard and cleavers.

There are a good variety of scattered trees which are a mixture of lime, ash, walnut, sycamore, horse chestnut, elder, beech and field maple.

The hedgerow along the western boundary is heavily influenced by the nearby gardens and contained sycamore, elder, lilac, laurel, leylandii, apple and cotoneaster. The recently planted hedgerow along the northern boundary contained a good mix of species including dogwood, field maple, hazel, blackthorn, dog rose, hawthorn and sycamore. The older hedge was dominated by hawthorn with blackthorn, sycamore, elder, elm and hazel.

There are nine recently planted fruit trees on the western side forming a young orchard.

Avifauna:

The hedgerows on the site provide foraging, roosting and nesting opportunities for a range of common bird species and blackbird, chaffinch and robin were observed during the visit. In addition starlings, which are a BAP species were seen feeding on the site.

Invertebrates:

The area of longer grass and the species rich hedgerow provide some nectar sources for butterflies so there are likely to be a range of common ones throughout the year. Small white, large white and holly blue butterflies were seen during the visit. There are old records of stag beetle from this site (1994) and they are still likely to be present in any areas of subterranean dead wood.

Herpetofauna:

The majority of the site is short mown grass which is unsuitable for this group. However there are records of slow worms in the area so there is a small chance they could migrate onto the areas which have been left longer, although there is insufficient habitat to support a viable population on its own.

Mammals:

Common species of mammal such as grey squirrel are likely to use the site. However the site is isolated and provides only limited cover for small mammals such as mice and voles. The site does provide good foraging habitat for hedgehogs, however the fence surrounding the site is probably too secure to allow hedgehogs to move into and out of the site.

Comments and recommendations:

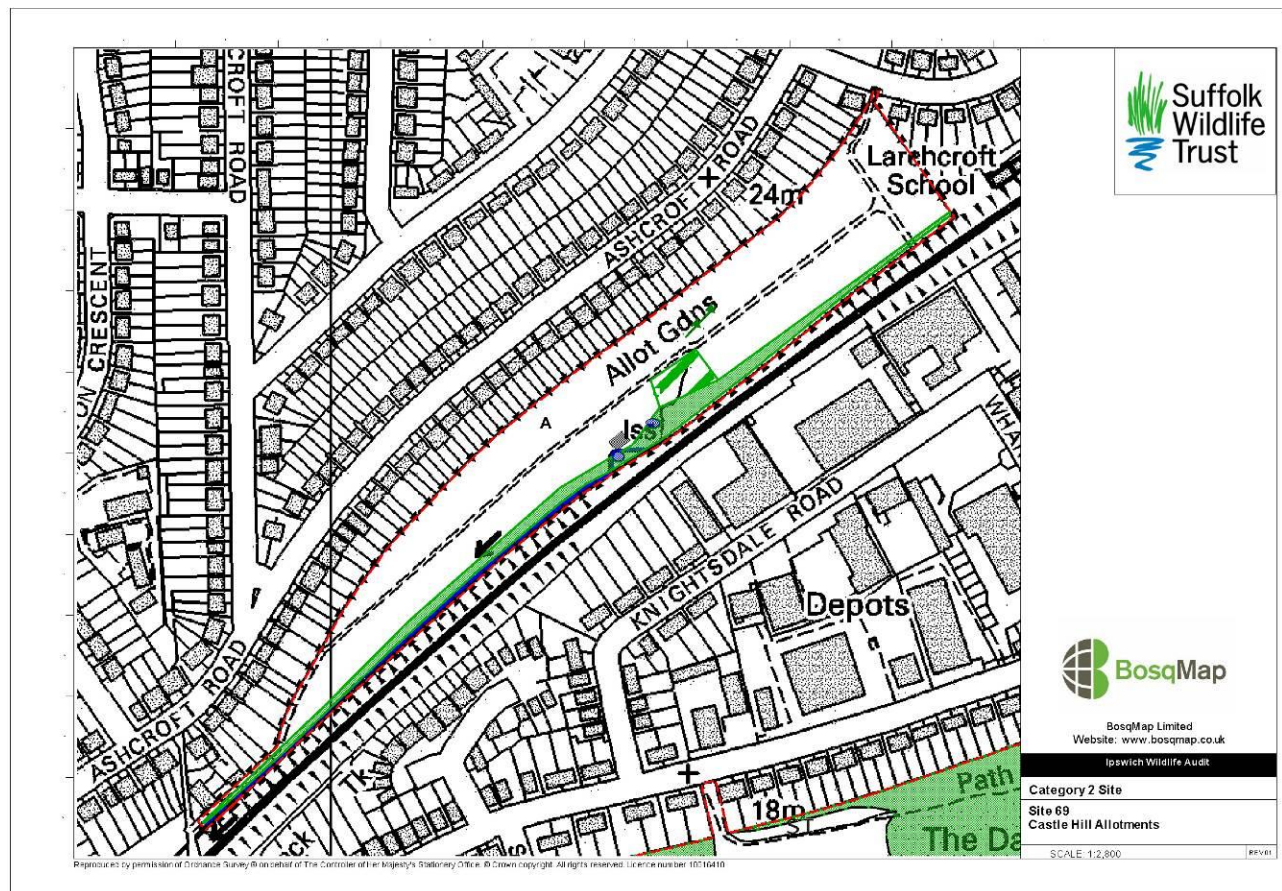
Extending the area of rough grassland around the perimeters by reducing the level of mowing could increase the nectar source for invertebrates and also benefit the foraging starlings. This could be mown annually in late autumn as it is thought that hedgehogs are less likely to be present on this site.

Site name

Site reference 69 – Castle Hill Allotments

IBC Ref: New
Site status: No wildlife designation
Grid ref: TM 15185 46463
Area: 3.23 hectares
Date: 30 May 2013
Recorder: S Bullion
Weather conditions: Cold and overcast 14°C
Ranking: 4
Biodiversity value: Medium

Map:



Photos:



Recently constructed pond



Habitat pile



Wildlife area

Habitat type(s):

Scrub and young woodland, species-poor rough grassland, short mown grass, cultivated areas

Subsidiary habitats:

Orchard, ponds, stream, small stretch of hedge

Site description:

This long, linear allotment site lies to the north of the railway line leading towards Westerfield, with this margin being marked by a tall, mature woodland belt. The plots are well cultivated, but approximately ten years ago an area adjacent to the railway line was set aside as a community wildlife area which is now maturing into high-value wildlife habitat. In this area young woodland is interspersed with grassy glades and there are two ponds. In addition, a small orchard has been planted and a wild flower plot sown. Away from this area and near the centre of the site is a short stretch of tall hedge which appears on maps dated as 1724 and was formerly along the track to Whitton Church. A clear, stony stream runs along much of the railway margin.

Protected species:

Slow worm (2010)

Protected species potential:

-

BAP habitats present:

-

BAP species seen:

House sparrow

Song thrush

BAP species known:

Slow worm and toad (2010)

BAP species potential:

Stag beetle

Connectivity:

The location of the allotments next to the railway line means that it has good connectivity to other sites and eventually the wider countryside 450m to the north-east.

Structural diversity:

The majority of the allotments are well maintained and cultivated. The creation of a community wildlife area, with woodland and grassland areas abutting the railway line, has resulted in an area of excellent structural diversity in this location.

Flora:

The wildlife area grassland was quite diverse with red campion, white deadnettle, creeping buttercup, meadow buttercup, garlic mustard, nettles, herb robert, cow parsley, cleavers, arum, green alkanet, cut-leaved crane's-bill, lesser stitchwort, ground ivy, burdock, hogweed, teasel, white clover, germander speedwell, bush vetch, salad burnet, false oat grass, cock's foot and barren brome. In the woodland was bugle.

The woodland area includes some lovely mature hazels, along with elm, hawthorn, elder, blackthorn, ash, dogwood, field maple. The short stretch of old hedge in the centre had hawthorn, blackthorn and walnut.

Avifauna:

The woodland and grassland habitats in the wildlife area are excellent for a range of bird species. Blackbird, song thrush and robin were seen during the visit and great spotted woodpecker and winter field fares have been noted by allotment holders. Bird boxes have been erected in the wildlife area.

Invertebrates:

The time of year and temperature was unsuitable for recording this group. Stag beetle larvae may be present if there is subterranean deadwood arising from old fruit trees. Log piles have been constructed in the wildlife area and it was recommended that in future some of this wood is buried, so provide habitat for saprophytic invertebrates such as stag beetles. Bee hives are kept next to the wildlife area.

Herpetofauna:

Slow worms are seen regularly by allotment holders across the site (formally reported in 2010 to SBRC). Railway margins provide excellent habitat for reptiles, so these animals will be part of a wider population in the area. There are numerous frog tadpoles in the ponds and toad has also been recorded on site in 2010.

Mammals:

The rough grassland and bramble will support a range of small mammals such as mice, voles and shrews. Grey squirrel, muntjac deer and foxes are known and the site provides excellent foraging and hibernation habitat for the declining populations of hedgehog which has been observed in spring 2013. Bat boxes have been erected in the wildlife area. The derelict pill box next to the railway line is currently unsuitable as a hibernation site for bats as it is filled with rubble and the slits are wired up to prevent rabbits on the railway line getting into the allotment.

Comments and recommendations:

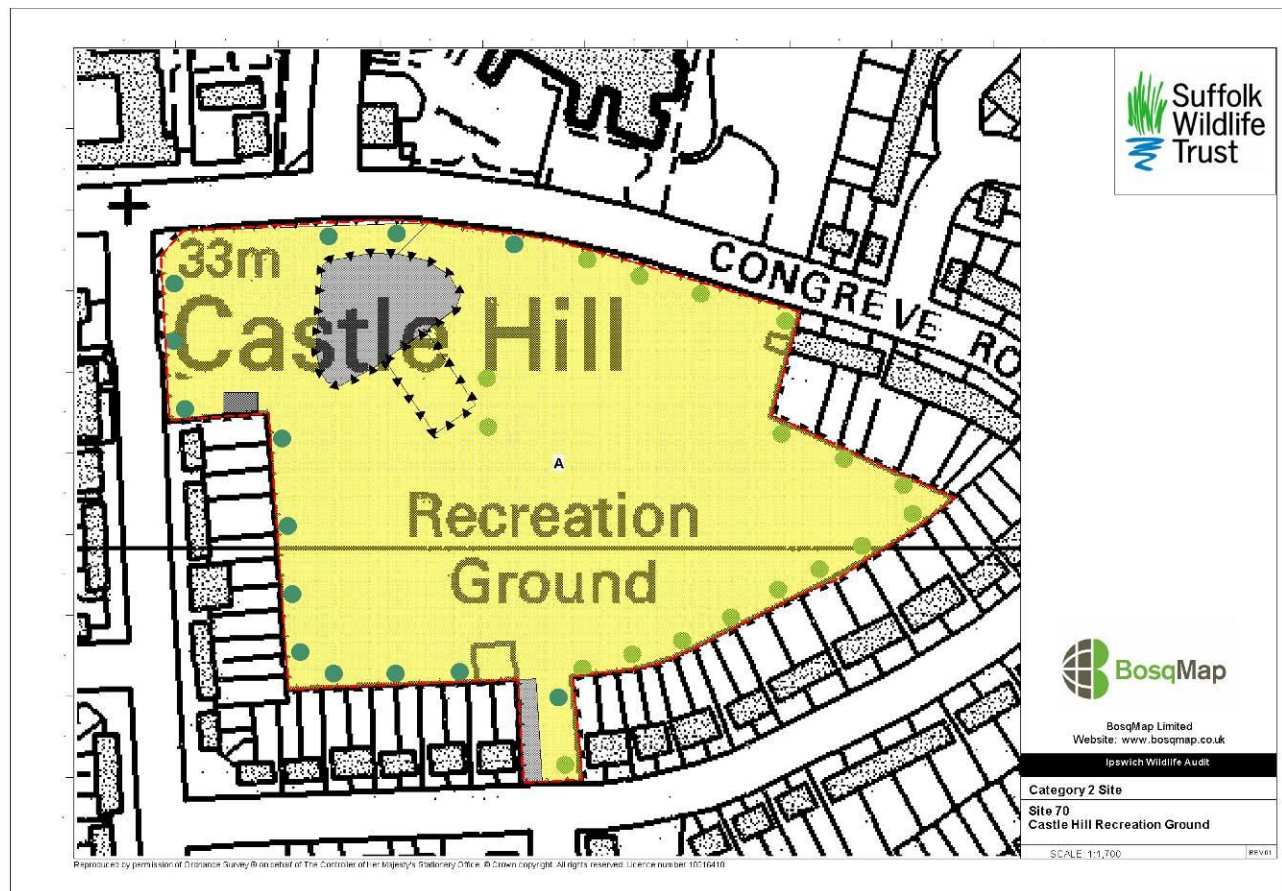
Although this is a well-used allotment, the creation of a wildlife area provides excellent habitat next to the railway line wildlife corridor. The woodland is being managed on a coppice rotation which is ideal. Grassy paths are mown to enable plot holders to walk through and enjoy the area. It is recommended that some of the log habitat is buried for larvae such as stag beetles, rather than just piling cut wood on the surface.

Site name

Site reference 70 – Castle Hill Recreation Ground

IBC Ref: W54
Site status: No wildlife designation
Grid ref: TM 15321 47031
Area: 2.9 hectares
Date: 3 June 2013
Recorder: S Bullion
Weather conditions: Warm and sunny 18°C
Ranking: 5
Biodiversity value: Low

Map:



Photos:



Rough grass areas in south of site



Short mown areas and specimen trees

Habitat type(s):

Species-poor rough grassland, short mown grass

Subsidiary habitats:

Native and ornamental specimen trees

Site description:

An area of amenity grassland surrounded by roads and housing. Along the southern margins the mowing regime has been relaxed and this has allowed rough grassland to develop. A children's play area is situated near the centre of the site surrounded by short mown areas. Scattered trees are present of both native and ornamental varieties.

Protected species:

-

Protected species potential:

-

BAP habitats present:

-

BAP species seen:

Starling (20+)

BAP species known:

-

BAP species potential:

-

Connectivity:

Connectivity is poor as the site is unconnected to any other areas of semi-natural habitat.

Structural diversity:

Structural diversity is limited as much of the site is short mown amenity grassland with specimen trees. However, the areas that have been left unmown add value to the site.

Flora:

The tall grassy sward was relatively species-poor and is likely to have originated from a sown mix as there was a dominance of rye grass. Yorkshire fog and cock's foot grasses were also noted.

Herbaceous species included ribwort plantain, dandelion, yarrow, germander speedwell, daisy, white clover and broad-leaved dock. Daffodils and cow parsley were present beneath some of the trees.

A large ash tree was present in the centre of the site. A large poplar tree displaying signs of die back was also present towards the northern edge of the site. Other trees included lime, aspen and cherry with non-native ornamental trees and shrubs. A beech hedge was situated close to the southern entrance.

Avifauna:

The presence of a flock of foraging starlings in the unmown grass areas was an interesting record. Chaffinch and wood pigeon were also seen.

Invertebrates:

The rough grassland will support locally common invertebrates. A small white butterfly was observed.

Herpetofauna:

The site is unsuitable for this group.

Mammals:

Hedgehogs may have visited the site from neighbouring gardens in the past, but as this is now a much scarcer species the likelihood of their presence is much reduced. However, the park will provide valuable foraging habitat for this species if there is a local population.

Comments and recommendations:

The site is well used by dog walkers but there did not appear to be an issue regarding dog faeces. The relaxation of mowing has improved structural diversity on site. It is recommended that these areas are cut in the late summer and the cuttings removed and this may help improve the floristic value of the sward.