

Abbas Ecology

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

**Proposed Suitable Alternative Natural
Greenspace at Hick's Farm, Throop.**

For:

BCP Council

August 2019 revised January 2021

CONTROLLED COPY


01 OF 03

01: Stuart Clarke

02: Tracey Scholefield.

03: Abbas Ecology

*This report is the responsibility of Abbas Ecology,
It should be noted, that whilst every effort is made to meet the client's brief,
no site investigation can ensure complete assessment
or prediction of the natural environment*

	Name	Date	Signature
Report prepared by:	Jonathan Crewe	16.09.19	
Revised:		29.01.2021	

Abbas Ecology
14 Cowleaze
Martinstown
Dorset DT2 9TD

Tel: 01305 889855

Email: info@abbasecology.co.uk

Reference Number: AE/4385

Executive Summary

Survey date: 2nd August and 22nd August 2019
Location: Land by Taylor Drive and N of Hicks Farm.
Grid Reference: SZ19
Surveyor: J Crewe

BCP Council own areas of land at Throop and are putting together a planning application to create a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace, (SANG), with associated small car park.

The survey looked at land to the S and E of Taylor Drive, as well as the open area N of Taylor Drive and E of Broadway lane. This part of the survey work was intended to inform plans to create a SANG parking area for up to 20 vehicles.

The survey also looked at the land running NW from Throop Mill between the Stour and Throop Road and extending to a point roughly 200m along Watery Lane. The locations surveyed are shown on Map 1 below.

The aim of the survey was to assess the current ecological value of the land; the sections N and S of Taylor Drive are thought to have been landscaped and planted at the time the land was developed. Land to the East is farmland that has not been developed; this is also true of the proposed SANG area, which is divided into small paddocks for horse grazing, with a buffer near to the river. Currently this does not have public access apart from members of Ringwood and District fishing club or day ticket holders.

The majority of the land surveyed is open grassland; this was assessed as having low ecological value. While some is grazed or cut much of it had long standing grass. The sward is dominated by coarse grasses with few herbs. The structure was simple, suggesting that areas not grazed are cut annually, preventing a tussocky structure forming. This reduced the potential value of the grassland to reptiles such as slowworm and common lizard. Small mammals are less likely to be common in grassland without some underlying thatch of dead grass for cover. Bats are likely to use the fields for foraging but the lack of linear features such as hedgerows suggests that the land affected by the proposal will be of relatively low value for foraging bats; the proposed planting should enhance the site as a resource for foraging bats.

Other habitats present include mature woodland, developing planted woodland, bramble scrub, reedbed and swamp, riverbank and wet margins and native hedgerow. These are a resource for invertebrates, nesting birds, bats and other mammals. The main areas are assessed individually below. None were thought to be of exceptional interest for biodiversity based on a single visit survey. A more detailed assessment would require visits across the seasons. The wildlife report prepared in 2018 as part of the Hicks Farm feasibility study for restoration and reuse of the buildings, (see Appendix 2) shows that the fields proposed for the SANG have a few notable plant species, including Corky-fruited water-dropwort, Vervain and Common meadow-rue, and that the Hicks farm total land holding had 32 different breeding bird species in 2018. The river is known to be used by otter and brown hare is understood still to be present. Bats could use the farm buildings and this should be considered within the restoration and reuse proposals.

In the main these areas are accessible by the public already and are not particularly threatened by the proposals, although increased disturbance may have a slight negative impact. The SANG proposal has the potential to achieve net gain for biodiversity through well planned management of recreational activities.

Scope

1.1 Survey

A preliminary ecological appraisal looks at the area to assess its likely value for protected species and other wildlife. It is not a specific survey for any one species and looks for general habitat types but it will identify the need for further survey work if required.

1.2 Site

The majority of the land surveyed is open grassland; this was assessed as having low ecological value overall. While some is grazed or cut much of it had long standing grass. The sward is dominated by coarse grasses with few herbs. The structure was simple, suggesting that areas not grazed are cut annually, preventing a tussocky structure forming. The meadows are understood to be flood plain meadows subject to seasonal inundation, with no recorded history of management as water meadows and no remnant structures such as ditches or sluices visible on the ground.

Other habitats present include mature woodland, developing planted woodland, bramble scrub, reedbed and swamp, riverbank and wet margins and native hedgerow.

1.3 Plan

The areas surveyed are approximately outlined in red in Map 1 below.



Map 1: Aerial view of sites surveyed (Copyright Google Earth)

1. Biological Records

Mapping information was looked at on the MAGIC Defra website. The results of this desk top study are as follows:

Sites

- A small tributary of the Moors River system SSSI runs from the Stour to Pig Shoot and S of Hurn Court to join the Moors river upstream from Blackwater.
- Town Common SSSI is about 2.4 km to the East

Habitats

- No Priority Habitat designations were found anywhere on the site.

Records were not obtained from Dorset Environmental Records centre at this stage.

2. Methodology

The areas mapped above were surveyed for evidence of and potential for protected species, and for ecological features of value that could be damaged by the proposed works. The areas surveyed were considered as 5 discrete sites, shown below as Map 3. The survey methodology followed guidance from Natural England's Standing Advice Sheets for the relevant species. Habitat features of interest were also noted. Potential impacts affecting the following species groups were considered.

Bats: The surveyor considered the value of the sites to roosting and foraging bats. Consideration was also given to the potential loss of features on the site which could be used as a wildlife corridor by commuting bats.

Breeding birds: The surveyor looked at features on the sites that could be used by breeding birds and considered the potential use of the site by foraging birds.

Reptiles: The habitat was considered in terms of the potential for use by common reptiles.

Badgers: Any area that could be used for feeding or could potentially contain a Badger sett was surveyed and any signs noted.

Otter and Water Vole: The site was considered as potential habitat for Water Vole and Otter activity.

Dormouse: Any habitat features that could potentially provide feeding or nesting habitat for dormice were checked for signs of this species and areas with potential for use by dormice were noted.

Great Crested Newt: Any habitat features that could be used by this species was noted. This included both terrestrial and aquatic features. Any ponds within 500m of the site must be assessed for its suitability for Great Crested Newts (providing that the landowner has granted access) using the standard Habitat Suitability Index form and method.

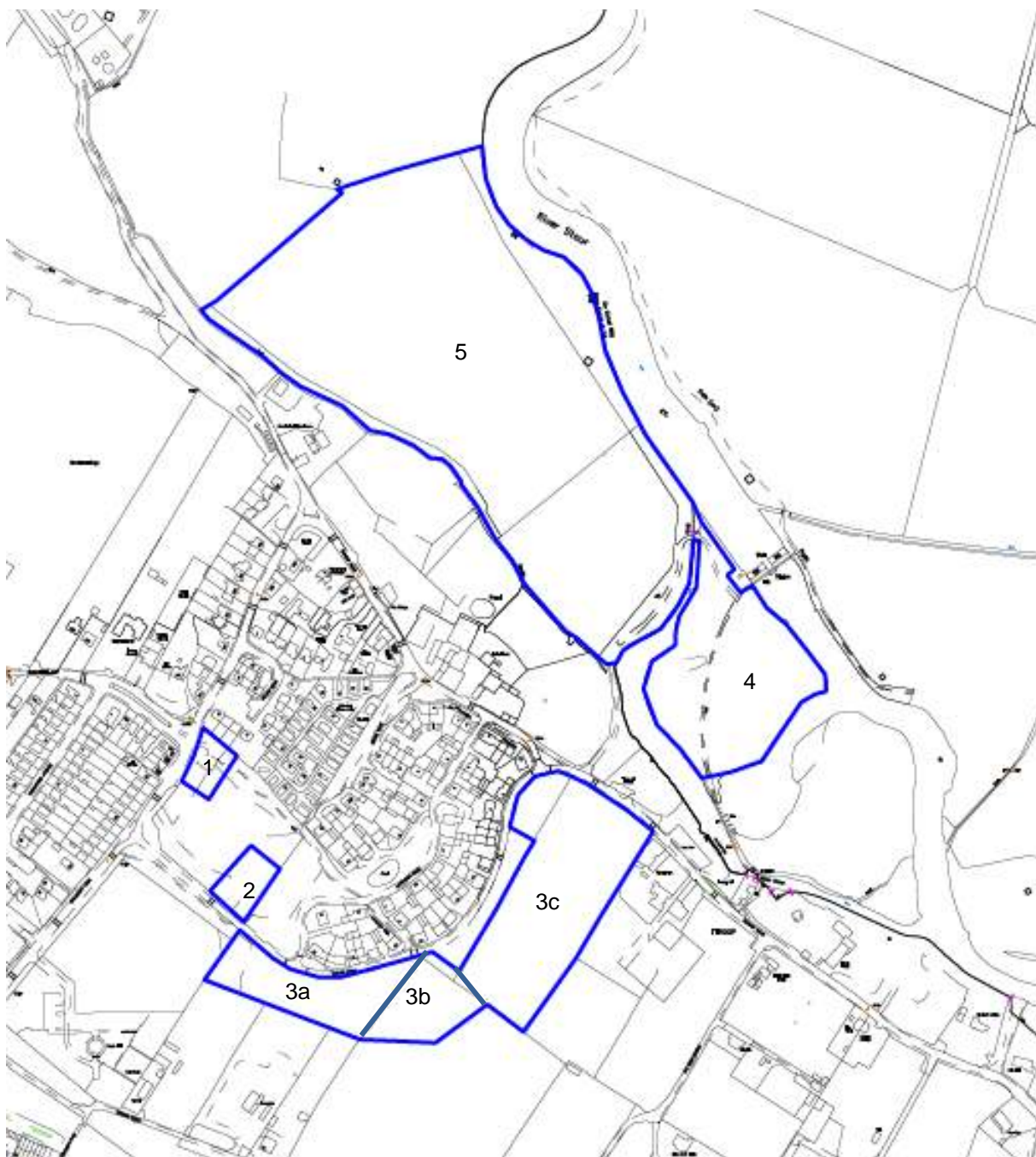
Invertebrates: Features of note for uncommon invertebrates were considered including damselfly and dragon flies and butterflies.

Habitat: All areas of semi-natural habitat were also surveyed, and any features of interest noted. Consideration was also given to the potential of this area to act as a wildlife corridor.

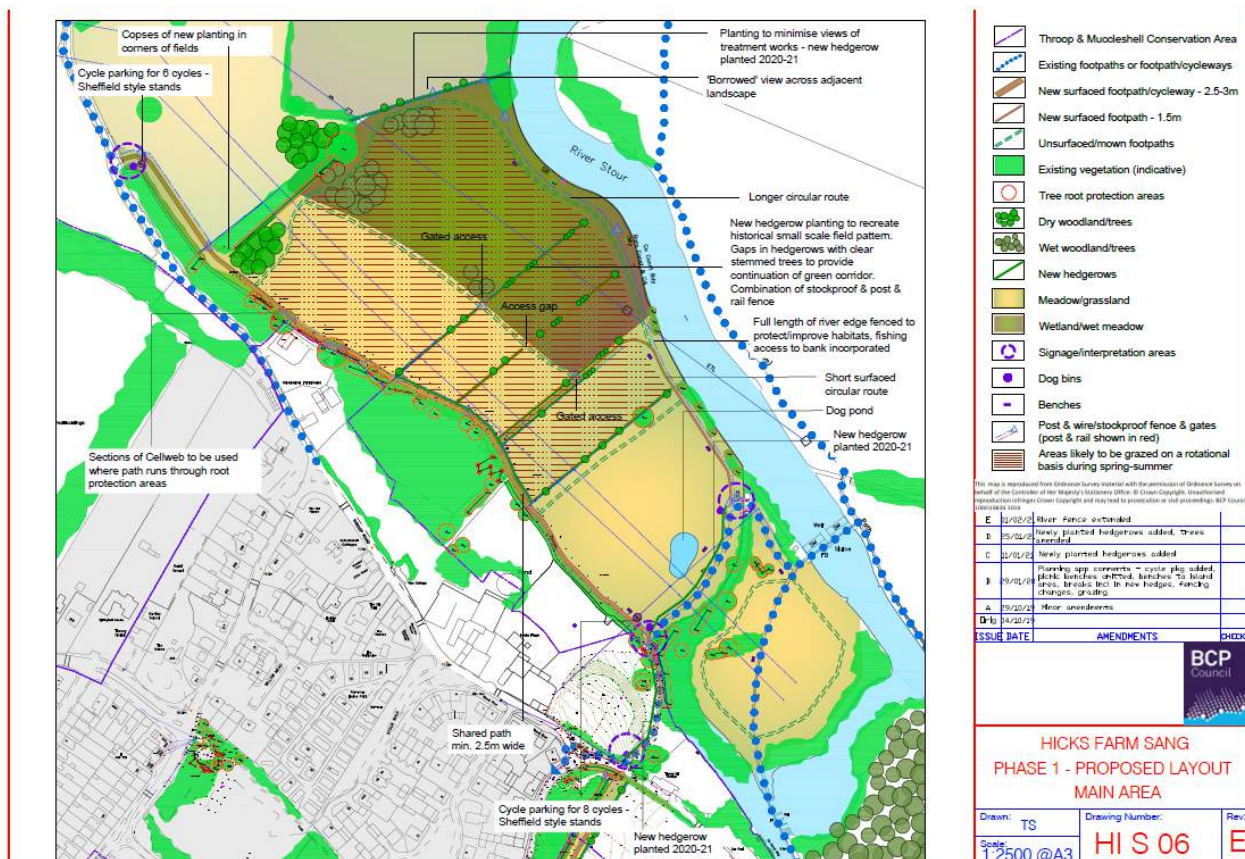
Legislation relating to these species can be found in Appendix I of this report.

Note for information

Ecological survey work was carried out as part of the feasibility study prepared for the Hicks Farm buildings during 2018. This covered a larger part of the Hicks Farm landholding and is included for information as Appendix 2.



Map 2 – numbered survey areas.



Map 3 – planting and layout plan of areas 4 and 5.

4. Results and Conclusions

The ecological value of a number of potential SANG car park options were looked at, areas 1 – 3 below.

Area 1: Assessed as potential SANG car park.

This piece of land at the NW corner of an open space has a small gravelled car park with space for a few cars only. There is a small woodland area to the South, possibly pre-dating development. The car park has a screen of elm bushes to Broadway Lane, with a larger elm present. To the East is a scrubby area of overgrown hawthorn and blackthorn with much ivy. The open ground bordering this has planted Ash, Oak and Field Maple, with Goat Willow also present. Extending the car park here would mean the removal of scrub and some of the planted trees. There could be a slight negative impact on habitat connectivity to the gardens and open land to the NW.

No evidence of use by protected species such as badgers was seen, although it is likely that birds nest in the wooded and scrubby areas. The potential for impacts on bats, reptiles, protected amphibians, dormice, otters and water voles was assessed as negligible. No potential bat roost features were seen in any trees that might be removed.



Looking W across existing car park



Scrubby area to the E.



Planted Ash in open area



Oak and Ash on the edge of open area.

Area 2: Assessed as potential SANG car park.

This site is an area of open grassland diagonally opposite the first site; creating a car park here would require the removal of 3 planted Ash trees. A gap would have to be made in the hedge alongside Taylor drive; this appeared to be recently planted, with species including Field Maple, Hawthorn, Dog Rose and Blackthorn. The hedgeline running NE along the edge of the open space appeared to be of older origin, possibly part of the former farmland; it appeared to be largely Blackthorn. The turf in the field was mown short; it was assessed as amenity grassland, with only 6 herbs found. Red Clover was present, as in most parts of the planted spaces, suggesting that it was included in a seed mix.

No evidence of use by protected species such as badgers was seen, although there is a sett to the South across Taylor drive. This species may use the open grassland to forage and move along the sheltered hedge line towards the houses off Taylor Drive, where they could forage in gardens. It is likely that birds nest in the hedges and scrubby areas. Potential for reptiles was low, with possible opportunities along the S hedge, and potential for protected amphibians, dormice, otters and water voles was assessed as negligible. No potential bat roost features were seen in any trees that might be removed and impact on bats through loss of a short section of hedgerow was assessed as negligible.



Open area with three Ash trees



Narrow grass strip inside the S hedgerow



View of the S hedge beyond the Ash trees



Inside the denser old hedge running NE.

Area 3: Assessed as potential SANG car park with possible vehicle access drive.

This larger area is broken down into 3 sections as shown in Map 2 above.

3a.

To the western end of this area is a small woodland with an active badger sett.



Fresh digging in this part of the wood suggests that this is the active area.

The land to the SE of the wood curves round alongside Taylor drive. This is an area of long grassland, extensive bramble scrub and young planted trees including Oak and Ash; birch was also present, possibly through natural seeding. A network of mown paths are maintained to allow a short circular walk. There is a boundary with farmland further West which had coppiced ash stools and appeared to be an original field boundary, as shown below in Map 3.



Long grass and mown paths.

Planted trees forming young woodland.

Area 3b.

This area is a group of fields with a quite impoverished flora, with Creeping Thistle and Ragwort prominent. It has been managed as arable land until quite recently.



Field.

Looking through the old hedgerow with ash stools

The location of a car park in area 3b would not impact the badger sett directly and any grassland lost is of low value to Biodiversity.

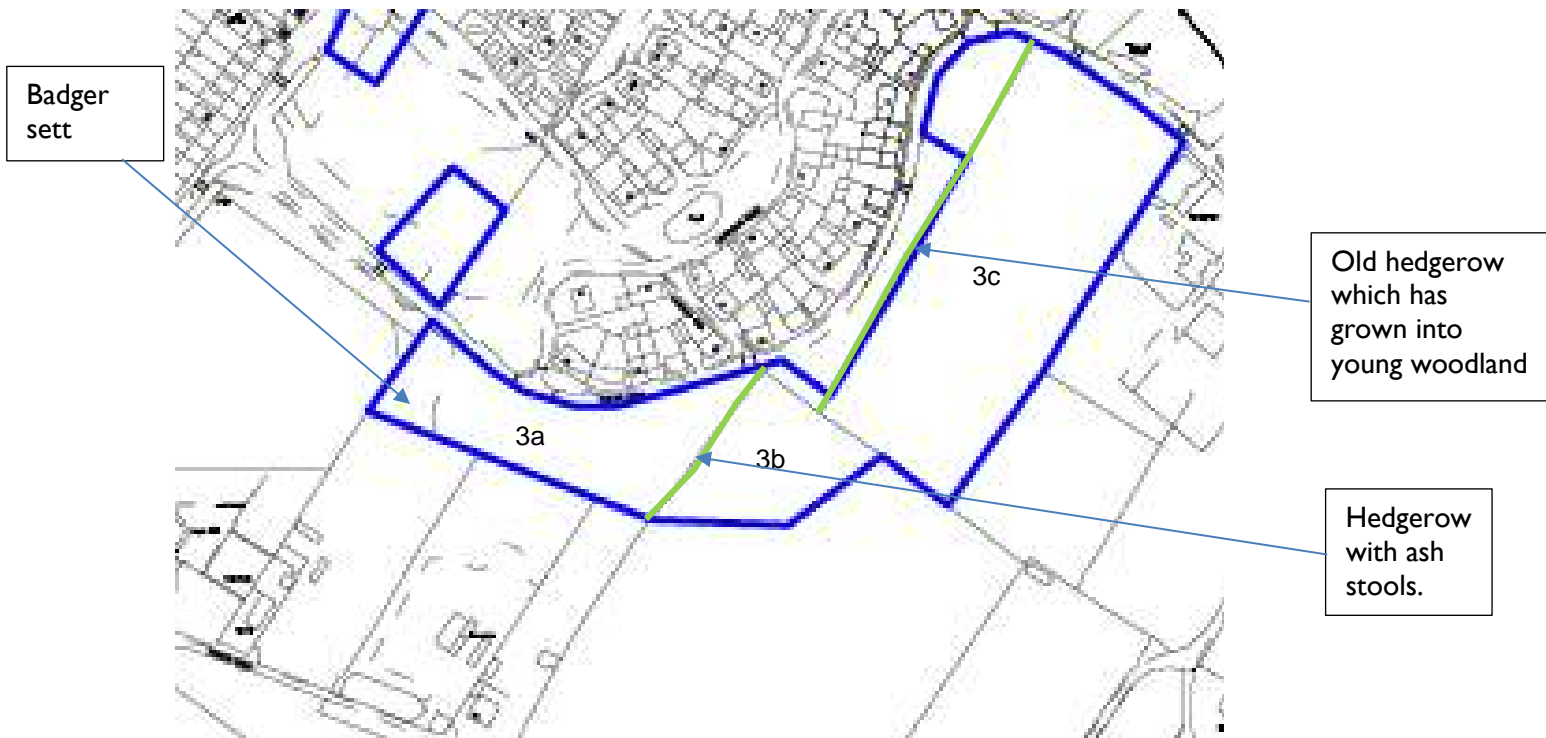
Area 3c

These fields have a margin of longer grassland which has slightly more botanical diversity, Sun Spurge and Corn Spurrey were present. The fields are bounded to the west by an old hedgerow with young woodland between this and Taylor Drive.



Views of the field margins

Care must be taken to avoid damage to the older hedgerow to the West of areas 3b and 3c; any parking surface should ideally be 2 metres from the hedgerow, which must be fenced off during construction. If creation of the vehicle access requires the removal of hedgerow plants the work must be done outside the bird nesting season. Further recommendations are given below.



Map 3:

No evidence of use by protected species such as badgers was seen, despite the sett in area 3a. It is likely that birds nest in the hedges and scrubby areas. Potential for reptiles was low; the longer grassland is a recent development on former arable land and lacks suitable structure for reptiles. Potential for protected amphibians, dormice, otters and water voles was assessed as negligible. No potential bat roost features were seen in any trees that might be removed and impact on bats through loss of a short section of hedgerow was assessed as negligible.

Area 4: Throop Island.

The footpath from Taylor Drive runs next to the old mill stream which curves round towards the Mill. This area was not entered as the depth of the water is not known. There is an extensive reedbed along the course of the stream and marginal wetland plants such as Purple Loosestrife and Orange Balsalm. Some large trees are present including Common lime, Ash and Crack Willow, with stands of younger Alder.



Purple loosestrife in reed swamp



Orange balsalm.



The mill stream

To the East of the mill stream is an area of open land which is mostly quite dry; this was dominated by thistles with large patches of bramble scrub and other plants such as Teasel and Burdock. Most of the larger trees are on this bank of the mill stream. Further East beyond the footpath is a small field which is grazed; this also had abundant Creeping Thistle. There is a woody margin to the mill pond.



Dense thistles W of the path through 4.



Field next to mill pond; low biodiversity.

Area 4 has high potential for biodiversity; this could be enhanced by a more varied management regime. The areas close to the mill stream are dominated by thistles and taller ruderals, regular cutting here might allow a more diverse grassland to develop. The stream itself is probably too shaded and some cutting and clearing might enhance the value of this area. Further recommendations are made below.

Area 5 – Horse grazed meadows along the river, open grassland and riverbank habitats.

This is the largest block of land although the habitat proved to be quite uniform. Almost all of the land area is occupied by open grassland with one mature oak tree in the SE and some hedges at the NW and Western borders. This area has been heavily grazed by horses. The grassland is subdivided into a number of smaller fields; there is a broad grassland buffer between the grazing units and the river; this was dominated by tall False Oat Grass, which appeared to be a major component of the grazing units, where they had been left to grow on. This grassland community is very common throughout lowland England and tends to develop on agricultural land that has been improved and then taken out of active use.

The riverbank has some willow scrub and marginal reedbeds; there are a few fishing swims where access is possible. Amphibious Bistort was seen growing as an aquatic plant in one of these access points. Moorhen were disturbed at intervals and a possible lapwing was seen flying off down river. Some of the nesting birds within the Hicks Farm holding were riverbank species, including Mute swan, Reed bunting, Reed warbler, Cetti's Warbler and Kingfisher and these could potentially be affected by disturbance.

The grassland became slightly more diverse to the NW, with some stands of Yarrow and Autumn hawkbit and more Red clover. The field furthest to the N appeared to have been heavily grazed to the point where the sward was poached with areas of bare soil. This had allowed a few different plants to appear including Marsh cudweed. There is an older hedgerow forming the N boundary of the Western half of the field; this had Field Maple, Blackthorn, Grey Willow, Hawthorn and Elder with a mature Oak at the E end. Wild hops were growing in the hedgerow and this section of field had a better sward which was much less grazed. A Roe deer was seen browsing in the field before it ran off to the West.

There is a track beyond the field gate, running S to the cottages beyond but this was overgrown and inaccessible to the NW. The scrub was mainly brambles and could be cleared fairly easily.



Buffer to river and riverbank



Grazed and ungrazed horse pasture.



Horse grazing down long grassland



Poached area in the N.



Roe deer in the NW corner



Hedge to NW.



Track running S

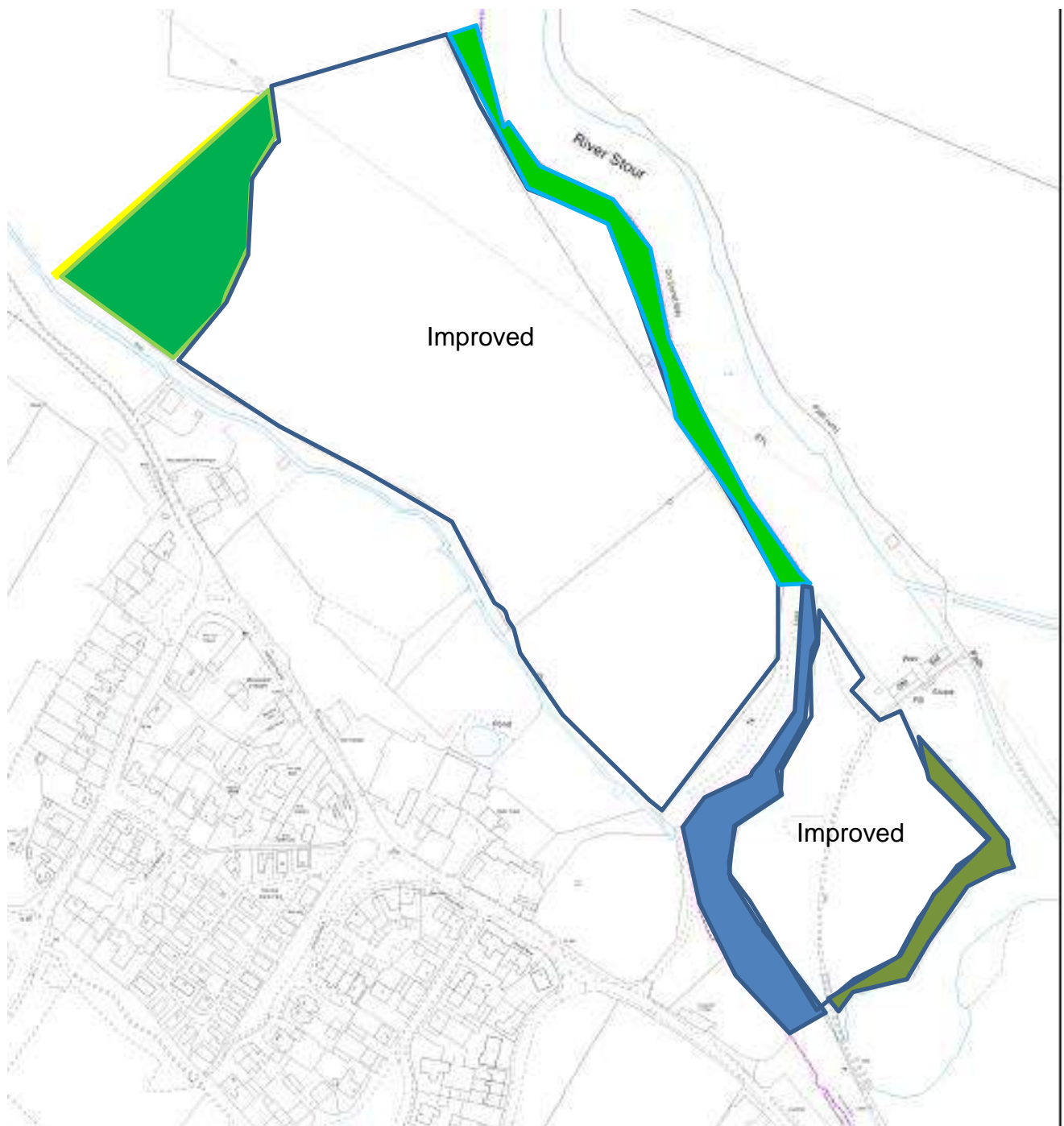


Scrubbed over track to NW.

Most of this part of the Hicks Farm holding is of low ecological value; the grassland has low diversity and consists mostly of Perennial Rye Grass with frequent coarse grasses such as False Oat-Grass and Cocksfoot. The riverbank is a valuable habitat with potential to be improved for wildlife and flowering plants and the NW corner is a less disturbed area with a good mature hedgerow and scrubby areas which could have reptiles.

No evidence of use by protected species such as badgers was seen, potential for protected amphibians and dormice was assessed as low - negligible. The NW corner has good bat foraging habitat and trees with potential to hold roosting features; plans will need to consider potential impacts on bats but use of the land as a SANG with new planting is likely to improve the value to foraging bats.

Although otters are known from this stretch of the Stour the potential for impact needs to be considered and recommendations are made below. Water voles are not thought to be present on the lower reaches of the Stour and no further work is recommended.



Map 4 – simple overview of habitats present in SANG area.

- NW area with potential for more diverse grassland
- Riverbank habitat with potential for improved wet margins.
- Reedbed and swamp along millstream
- Marginal willow scrub by mill pond – valuable cover for wildlife.
- Improved grassland - horse grazed and or standing for hay cut.
- Native hedgerow.

4. Constraints.

The timing of the survey meant that many annually flowering plants had gone over.

5. Recommendations

Note: the concept plan for the SANG is included as Appendix 3.

- The sites surveyed include an active badger sett, bird breeding habitat in marginal scrub trees and hedges and possibly small areas of reptile habitat. Further survey work must be undertaken to assess potential impact on foraging and breeding otter. No other survey work for protected species within the proposed SANG is recommended. The removal of vegetation should avoid bird nesting season, March to August inclusive; if this is not possible small areas can be examined for nesting birds by an ecologist immediately before work begins.
- The current proposed site of the new car park does not affect any habitat of ecological value with the possible exception of the older hedgerow to the West; creating an access may require the removal of some hedgerow plants and trees in order to ensure compliance with highway standards. This will be kept to the minimum possible and should not have a significant ecological impact.
- The future public use of the site needs to balance the interests of users, particularly dog walkers, with the potential for biodiversity. Areas of ecological value or high potential such as the riverbank will need to have some areas that cannot be accessed by dogs at least during crucial periods such as peak bird nesting season – April- June.* It is not known whether fishermen are currently able to bring dogs onto site but in general it is assumed that disturbance by dogs along the S bank is currently low. The N bank has an existing footpath and is likely to be more disturbed as a result.
- Proposals for planting and new hedge creation are generally welcomed; native species should be used wherever possible.

*Note that the fencing along the riverbank now extends the full length of the SANG (see concept plan on page 30 – Appendix 3). This will mean that one bank is undisturbed by dogs, which have access from the footpath on the far bank.

Appendix I

Legislation (summary)

I. Wildlife Protection legislation

Mammals:

Otters, dormice, water voles, and all bat species are fully protected under section 9 (5) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). According to this act it is an offence to:

- Intentionally capture, kill or injure one of these animals
- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used by one of these animals for shelter or protection
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb an animal whilst it is using this place
- sell, offer for sale or advertise for one of these animals live or dead

Designated as European Protected Species' **otters, dormice and all bat species** receive additional protection from the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, under Schedule 2 which implements the EC Directive 92/43/EEC in the United Kingdom. In accordance with this act, it is an offence to:

- Deliberately capture or kill a European Protected Species
- Deliberately disturb a European Protected Species
- Damage or destroy the breeding site or resting place of a European Protected Species

The **greater and lesser horseshoe bats, barbastelle and bechstein's bats**, are also listed under Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations. Areas which support populations of these species can therefore be considered for designation as a Special Areas of Conservation (**SACs**).

Badgers receive protection from the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. According to this act, it is an offence to:

- to willfully kill, injure, take, possess or cruelly ill-treat a badger;

- to attempt to do so; or
- to intentionally or recklessly interfere with a sett.

Reptiles and Amphibians:

Slow worms, adders, grass snake, viviparous lizard, are protected against intentional killing, injuring or sale under section 9 (1) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Great crested newt, natterjack toad, sand lizard and smooth snake are fully protected under section 9 (5) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). These species also receive additional protection as **European Protected Species** under schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, which implements the EC Directive 92/43/EEC in the United Kingdom.

Birds:

Please Note: All breeding birds and their nests are protected under the general protection of Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 as amended. This makes it an offence to disturb breeding birds.

2. Conserving and enhancing the Natural Environment. Section 15, NPPF updated February 2019

The National Planning Framework was re-issued in July 2018 and updated in February 2019. Key points relevant to the Natural Environment are given below.

8. Re: Sustainable development. The NPPF recognizes “that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives).

These are the **economic objective**, the **social objective**, and the **environmental objective**; the full text of paragraph c) relating to this third objective reads as follows:

“to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.”

175. When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;

b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;

c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and

d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.

176. The following should be given the same protection as habitats sites:

- a) potential Special Protection Areas and possible Special Areas of Conservation;
- b) listed or proposed Ramsar sites; and
- c) sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on habitats sites, potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation, and listed or proposed Ramsar sites.

177. The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), **unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site.**”

Footnote 56 also notes that Circular 06/2005 (**Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - statutory obligations and their impact within the planning system, Part IV Conservation of Species Protected by Law**) provides further guidance in respect of statutory obligations for biodiversity and geological conservation and their impact within the planning system.

Appendix 2: Hicks Farm Wildlife Report 2018

Hicks Farm Wildlife Surveys

Background

Hick's Farm is almost 50ha in size, most of which is pasture. Until recently it was managed as a dairy farm by a tenant farmer but is now largely grazed by cattle (belonging to Bournemouth Council) and ponies. Some fields are cut for hay. The land was entered into a Countryside Stewardship scheme in 2018 which provides funding for management work.

Because the land has remained relatively undisturbed with little public access, the wildlife value has remained high. For example, it is the only place left in the borough where brown hares can be seen. Otters frequent the river and kingfishers are a common sight. In the winter, wading birds such as lapwing, snipe and curlew are attracted to the wet meadows.



Kingfisher



Lapwing



Brown hare

This is a special place for wildlife and appropriate management will enhance its value. For example, the new hedgerows will eventually provide additional cover and nesting sites for birds and small mammals.

Although the grassland was agriculturally 'improved' from the 1960s, there has been no application of artificial fertiliser or pesticides for many years and the botanical diversity is increasing.

A feature of the farmland is the presence of a number of veteran field oaks.

Plants

There is a wide variety of habitats within the recording area, from drier hill-side meadows to lush riverbanks and ditches, some old mature hedgerows and other newly planted areas of trees and hedges, and some veteran native trees.

A plant survey was undertaken by local botanist Felicity Woodhead during 2018 and a total of 350 species were recorded. Most of these are common and widespread but there are some more notable species that are locally or even nationally rare (see Table 1).

Common name	Scientific name	Survey compartment
Mousetail	<i>Myosurus minimus</i>	C1
Corky-fruited water-dropwort	<i>Oenanthe pimpinelloides</i>	B1, B3, B4, C1, C3, E2, F6, G2, G3
Marsh yellow-cress	<i>Rorippa palustris</i>	C2
Common meadow-rue	<i>Thalictrum flavum</i>	C4, E3
Flowering rush	<i>Butomus umbellatus</i>	B1, B2, B5
Lesser bulrush	<i>Typha angustifolia</i>	B2
Marsh speedwell	<i>Veronica scutellata</i>	B2, B3
Weasel's-snout	<i>Misopates orontium</i>	F1
Dwarf mallow	<i>Malva neglecta</i>	F2, F3
Musk stork's-bill	<i>Erodium moschatum</i>	F4
Nettle-leaved goosefoot	<i>Chenopodium murale</i>	E1
Vervain	<i>Verbena officinalis</i>	E1
Soft shield-fern	<i>Polystichum setiferum</i>	D2
Pale flax	<i>Linum bienne</i>	A3
Shining crane's-bill	<i>Geranium lucidum</i>	A6
Intermediate polypody	<i>Polypodium interjectum</i>	A6
Hairy buttercup	<i>Ranunculus sardous</i>	F7

Table 1. Hick's Farm notable plant species

Fields B1 and B2 (see Fig 1) are the most botanically diverse and the river bank generally has a good variety of species. Field C4 has a good variety of flowering plant species along with several veteran oaks. There are other mature oaks throughout the site. Some of the original hedgerows remain and others that were grubbed out in the 1960s have been replanted and are becoming established.

It is important that the current management of the grassland by grazing and hay cutting is maintained and that there is no application of fertiliser. These are requirements of the Countryside Stewardship agreement.

There is one block of woodland at A6 which is not particularly interesting botanically but does have a large badger sett.

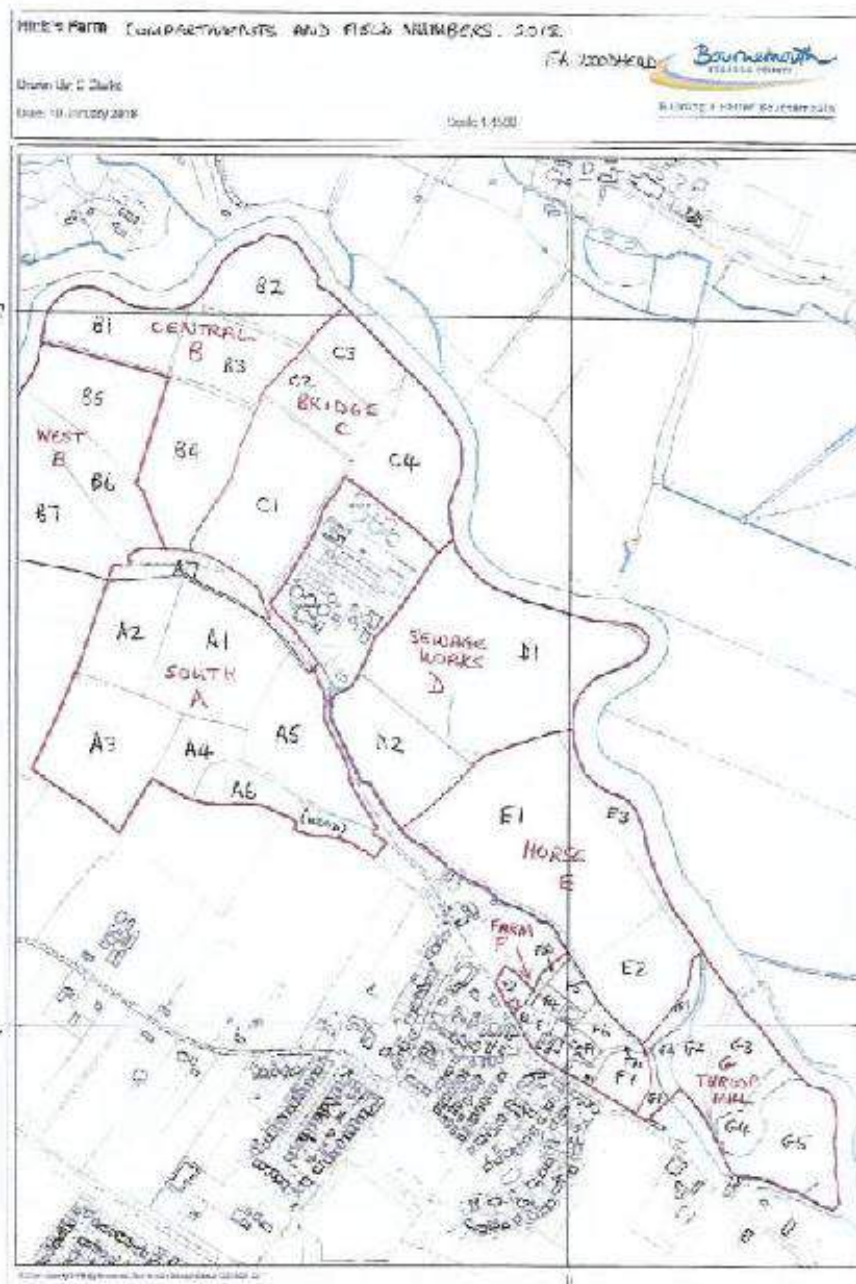


Fig. 1. Compartments and field numbers for botanical survey.

Birds

A survey of the breeding birds was undertaken by Oily Frampton who carried out 4 visits during April and May 2018. 32 species were recorded as breeding, most of which were using the mature hedges and the woodland as nesting sites. The marginal vegetation along the river provides nesting sites for species including reed warbler, reed bunting and moorhen.

Hicks Farm BBS Totals		Visit 1 - 14th April 2018				Visit 2 - 29th April 2018				Visit 3 - 13th May 2018				Visit 4 - 28th May 2018				ESTIMATED BREEDING PAIRS	
		Non-breeding	Possible breeding	Probable breeding	Confirmed breeding	Non-breeding	Possible breeding	Probable breeding	Confirmed breeding	Non-breeding	Possible breeding	Probable breeding	Confirmed breeding	Non-breeding	Possible breeding	Probable breeding	Confirmed breeding		
B.	Blackbird	S=7	P=2				P/T=4			S=4	P/T=3			H/S=4	T=2			8	
BC	Blackcap	S=6				S=5	T=3			S=3	T=4			S=3	T=3			7	
BT	Blue Tit	S/N=4	P=4			H=1	P=2	ON=1		H=1	T=1	ON=2		H=1	T=2	ON=3		5	
BZ	Buzzard	H=1				H=1				H=1				H=1				Possibly 1	
CW	Cott's Warbler	S=2				S=3	T=2				T=4				T=3			5	
CH	Chaffinch	S=7	P=1			H/S=8	T=2			H/S=6	T=6			H/S=3	T=5			10	
CC	Chiffchaff	S=5				S=5	T=2			S=3	T=4			S=1	T=3			6	
CT	Coal Tit	S=1													A=1			1	
CD	Collared Dove																	Possibly 1	
CS	Common Sandpiper									M=1								0	
D.	Duncock	S/N=11	P=2			H/S=6	T=6			H/S=8	T=7				T=6			13	
GO	Goldfinch	H=2					T=1			H/S=2	T=1				T=1			2	
GS	Great Spotted Woodpecker	H=1									N=1				N=1			1	
GT	Great Tit	S=6	P=4			H/S=3	T=5			H/S=4	T=8	ON=1		S=2	T=5	ON=3		9	
GR	Greenfinch	S=2	P=1			S/N=2	T=1			H=3	T=3				T=2			4	
GI	Grey Wagtail	S=1																0	
J.	Jay	H=1								H=1								Possibly 1	
KF	Kingfisher									H=2				H=1				Possibly 1	
L.	Lapwing																	0	Possibly 1 on opp side of R. Stour
LT	Long-tailed Tit	H=1				H=1												Possibly 1	
MG	Magpie										P=1	ON=1				ON=1		1	
MP	Meadow Pipit	H=1																0	
MT	Mistle Thrush										N=1				N=1			1	
MH	Moorhen	H=1	P=1		ON=1		P=4		ON=1		T=1				T=2		UN/ON=2	2	Plus 1 on opp side of River Stour
MS	Mute Swan																	1	Plus 2 on opp side of River Stour
RB	Reed Bunting	S=4				S=1	P=1			S=2	T=2				T=1			2	Plus 3 on opp side of River Stour
RW	Reed Warbler					S=8				S=7	T=5			H/S=2	T=12			10	
R.	Robin	S=11					P/T=10			S=5	T=6			S=4	T=6			10	
ST	Song Thrush	S=2	P=2			S=2	P=2			S=1	T=3				T=1			4	
SD	Stock Dove		P=1				P=1				T=1				T=1			1	
SL	Swallow						N=3+				N=6				N=3+			4	Possibly 1 pair within Sewage Works
TC	Trees Creeper					H=1	P=1				N=1			H=2				2	
WA	Water Rail	H=1																0	
WH	Whitethroat	M=1				S=3	D=3			H/S=2	T=4			H/S=3	T=1			6	
WW	Willow Warbler	M=1				S=1				H=1								Possibly 1	
WP	Woodpigeon	H=4	P=1			H=5	T=3	ON=1		H=1	T=3	UN=1			T=2			6	
WR	Wren	S/N=27				S=5	T=12			S=8	T=9			S=5	T=11			17+	

With the exception of non-breeders, the numbers above relate to pairs, nests, singing males or territories. Not individual number of birds seen

Table 2. Breeding Birds Survey results.

Butterflies

A weekly butterfly survey was undertaken between April and September following a fixed transect route (see map1). In total 19 species were recorded as shown in Table 3 below.

Species	Section recorded (see map)
Small skipper	2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11
Large skipper	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9
Brimstone	2, 3, 9, 10
Large white	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10
Small white	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11
Green-veined white	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11
Orange-tip	3, 4, 6, 8, 10
Purple hairstreak	2
Brown argus	3, 9, 10
Common blue	6, 10
Holly blue	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 9, 10
Red admiral	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 10, 11
Painted lady	2, 3
Small tortoiseshell	1, 3, 5, 6
Peacock	2, 3, 8, 10, 11
Comma	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11
Speckled wood	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11
Gatekeeper	4, 5, 6, 8, 10
Meadow brown	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11

Table 3. Butterfly records

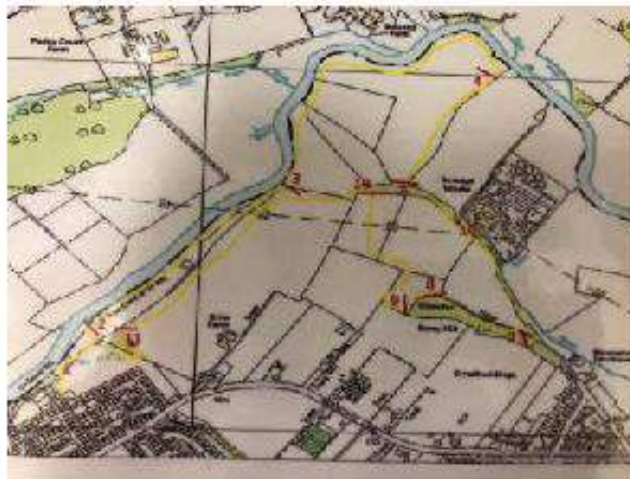


Fig. 2. Butterfly transect route

Dragonflies and damselflies

The following species have been recorded at Hicks Farm. This part of the Stour Valley is well known as a good place to see white-legged damselflies and scarce chasers, both of which are scarce in Britain as a whole.

Damselflies

Banded demoiselle
White-legged
Common blue
Azure
Large red

Dragonflies

Downy emerald
Emperor
Brown hawker
Scarce chaser
Southern hawker
Migrant hawker
Broad-bodied chaser
Black-tailed skimmer
Common darter

Summary

It is important that the general character of the area is retained. This will be reflected in the sympathetic renovation of existing brick buildings, in the style of the new buildings and in the way the land is managed.

There is scope to enhance the wildlife value of the land with sympathetic management of existing features and habitats and by the creation of additional habitats such as wetland and woodland. This will benefit a range of typical farmland wildlife that is in general decline throughout our countryside.

Whilst the potential for more access to the land is recognised, this will need to be carefully managed to ensure that important species such as brown hares and otters are not lost because of disturbance.

Appendix 3: concept plan

