

NEW LOCAL PLAN EVIDENCE BASE: LOCAL WILDLIFE SITES (LoWS) REVIEW 2018

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The Council is undertaking a review of its adopted local development plan policies to ensure that they are based on up to date evidence, are robust and provide clarity for local communities. To inform this review, the Council is reviewing and updating its evidence, where necessary, including on sites of local ecological value.
- 1.2 A Local Wildlife Sites (LoWS) Review has been commissioned and completed to provide a source of up to date and robust information on sites of local wildlife value and nature conservation importance in the District. This report explains the evidence and key findings of the final Local Wildlife Sites (LoWS) Review 2018, as well as the implications for Rochford District's plan-making.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Local Wildlife Sites (LoWS) are areas of land that are designated and protected for their wildlife value and nature conservation importance. LoWSs are identified and selected locally based on their observed and recorded wildlife value. Their designation is supported through the adoption of a Local Plan and are a material consideration in the determination of any relevant planning applications.
- 2.2 They are distinct from other nature conservation designations of national or international value, including Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Ramsar Sites. These areas have been designated under separate legislation including the Ramsar Convention, the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the European Union Habitats and Birds Directives. Local Wildlife Sites are of lower nature importance than those sites designated nationally or internationally, but are sites considered to hold some wildlife value worthy of protection at a local level.
- 2.3 The Council's existing Core Strategy 2011 identifies 39 LoWS scattered across the District. They comprise areas of wood land, grass land, mosaic coastal and fresh water habitats, across both public and privately owned land. The selection of these 39 sites was informed by a previous LoWS Review undertaken in 2007, with these sites formally being allocated in the Allocations Plan 2014.
- 2.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019 requires Plans to identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife rich habitats and wider ecologic networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity – including LoWSs – and wildlife corridors and 'stepping stones' that connect them. Furthermore, the NPPF requires Plans to promote the conservation, restoration and

enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and to identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

- 2.5 The Council's existing planning policies, including Policy ENV1 of the Core Strategy, require the Council to maintain, restore and enhance sites of nature conservation importance, including LoWSs. The Council is also required to work with key stakeholders to promote 'designing in' wildlife schemes in order to obtain a gain in biodiversity and ensure that any unavoidable impacts from development are appropriately mitigated against.
- 2.6 The existing LoWS designations in the Allocations Plan were informed by the 2007 LoWS Review. There is now a need to update the Council's evidence base to ensure that the emerging Plans are informed by the most robust and up to date evidence on areas of wildlife value and nature conservation. In the 11 years since the latest Review, it is conceivable that the wildlife value of currently designated sites may have deteriorated so as to no longer justify their designation, whilst currently undesignated sites may now be worthy of designation.
- 2.7 The Council therefore commissioned Place Services, the consultancy arm of Essex County Council, to undertake a new LoWS Review for the District. This Review will help to inform the Council's emerging plan-making.

3 LOCAL WILDLIFE SITES REVIEW 2018

Aims and Methodology

- 3.1 The LoWS Review has been informed by site surveys to assess each site for its wildlife value in accordance with criteria set out in the Essex LoWS criteria (2016) produced by the Essex Local Sites Partnerships (ELSP).
- 3.2 Assessments have taken place on all 39 designated LoWS in the Allocations Plan, the 10 historic sites that were deleted as a result of the 2007 LoWS Review, and an additional nine undesignated sites which the Council or a stakeholder proposed for consideration.

Main Findings

- 3.3 The LoWS Review recommends that the following 38 currently designated LoWS continue to be designated as such (subject to some minor boundary changes), as they continue to meet a relevant criteria for inclusion:

- Kingley Wood;
- Hullbridge Road Meadow;
- Blounts Wood;
- Cottons;
- Beckney Wood;
- Potash Wood;

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- Hockley Woods Complex;
 - Grove Woods;
 - Rawreth Hall Wood;
 - Brandy Hole Marsh Extension;
 - Hockleyhall/Crabtree Woods;
 - Folly Wood;
 - New England Wood;
 - Bett's Wood;
 - The Dome Grassland;
 - Edwards Hall Park;
 - Marylands Wood;
 - Plumberow Wood;
 - Belchamps Camp, Hockley Woods;
 - Gustedhall Wood;
 - The Scrubs;
 - Primrose Wood;
 - Trinity Wood;
 - Magnolia Nature Reserve and Fields;
 - Hyde Wood;
 - Sutton Ford Bridge Pasture;
 - River Roach at Rochford;
 - Wood Sloppy;
 - Butts Hill Pond;
 - The Finches;
 - Lion Creek Meadow;
 - Canewdon Special Roadside Verge;
 - Barling Pits;
 - Star Lane Pits;
 - Paglesham Seawall;
 - Wakering From Landfill Site;
 - Great Wakering Common; and
 - Wallasea Island

3.4 Furthermore, it is recommended that the following currently designated site is deleted, as it no longer meets any of the relevant criteria for inclusion:

- Doggetts Pond

3.5 It is also recommended that the following eight currently undesignated sites are designated, as they are considered to meet a relevant criteria for inclusion:

- Cherry Orchard Country Park;
- Round Hill Pastures;
- Ashingdon Pastures;
- Buller's Grove;
- Bartonhall Grove;
- Barton Hall Creek Seawall;
- Stannets Creek; and
- Marylands Nature Reserve

- 3.6 In summary, the LoWS Review recommends that a total of 46 sites are designated as local wildlife sites, whilst one existing site is deleted. All other sites surveyed are not considered to meet any relevant criteria for inclusion.
- 3.7 It also defines two Local Geological Sites (LoGS) at Star Lane Pits (Great Wakering) and Hullbridge Foreshore (Hullbridge), which were identified by GeoEssex.
- 3.8 In addition to the identification of sites, the LoWS Review also provides advice and guidance on policy writing for plan-making, and an assessment of the compliance of the Council's current planning policies against the latest national policy, including the NPPF. This advice and guidance will help to inform the preparation of emerging Plans.
- 3.9 It should be noted that these recommendations would form part of the plan-making evidence base but do not set or constitute policy. Any recommendations, if taken forward by the Council, would not become policy until any emerging Plan was adopted. These recommendations will help to inform the ongoing plan-making for the District.

4 RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Council last undertook a review of its LoWS in 2007; there is therefore a risk that this review, and the Council's existing policies that are based on it, will become out of date or ineffective. If the Council fails to update its evidence on LoWS, its emerging Plans would not be informed by the most up to date nor robust evidence on the condition and value of sites of local wildlife value. It may therefore weaken the Council's ability to protect sites of local wildlife value and nature conservation importance through the planning process. It may also result in the Council's emerging Plans being found unsound at the examination stage.

5 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None.

6 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Local Wildlife Sites (LoWS) Review 2018 would provide a source of up to date and robust evidence to inform the Council's emerging Plans. In doing so, it will allow the Council to adequately conserve, restore and enhance sites of local wildlife value through the planning process. Without this Review, the Council's ability to protect sites of local wildlife value and nature conservation importance through the planning process may be weakened.

7 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The preparation of this LoWS Review was achieved through existing resources and agreed budgets.

8 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), as revised in 2019, requires Plans to *inter alia* promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and to identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity. It also requires Plans to identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife rich habitats and wider ecologic networks.
- 8.2 The LoWS Review would help to support and inform the Council's emerging Plans by providing a source of up to date and robust evidence on the condition and value of sites of local wildlife value. This Review would therefore help to ensure that the Council's emerging Plans comply with national planning policy requirements. Failure to prepare such a Review could result in the Council's emerging Plans failing to comply with national policy, and therefore failing to be found sound at the Examination stage.

9 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and found there to be no impacts (either positive or negative) on protected groups as defined under the Equality Act 2010.

10 RECOMMENDATION

- 10.1 It is proposed that the Sub-Committee **RESOLVES**

That the Local Wildlife Sites Review 2018 set out in Appendix A be noted as evidence and published on the Council's website.



Shaun Scrutton

Managing Director

Background Papers:-

None.

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Rochford District Local Wildlife Sites (LoWS) Review



Client

Rochford District Council

Date:

10th September 2018

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About us

Place Services is a leading public sector provider of integrated environmental assessment, planning, design and management services. Our combination of specialist skills and experience means that we are uniquely qualified to help meet the requirements of the planning process.

Our Natural Environment Team has expertise of arboriculture, biodiversity, countryside management and ecology. This multidisciplinary approach brings together a wide range of experience, whether it is for large complex briefs or small discrete projects. We aim to help our clients protect and improve the natural environment through their planning, regulatory or land management activities. This approach ensures that not only our clients will fulfil their legal duties towards the natural environment, but they do so in a way that brings positive benefits to wildlife and people.

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2.0	09.8.2018	Sue Hooton	Final
2.1	10.8.2018	Neil Harvey	Internal review
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This report has been compiled in accordance with BS 42020:2013 Biodiversity – Code of practice for planning and development, as has the survey work to which it relates.

The information, data, advice and opinions which have been prepared and provided are true, and have been prepared and provided in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's Code of Professional Conduct. We confirm that the opinions expressed are our true and professional *bona fide* opinions.

Biological Data:

Ownership of biological data gained through the assessment directly associated with the titled project or named part thereof remains in the ownership of the client who commissioned this assessment. However, as part of membership to our professional body we are required to provide our biological results to applicable biological record centres. As such, it is our intention to supply biological data unless directly instructed in writing not to do so by the commissioning client.

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1. Introduction

1.1 The Purpose of This Report

The recently published National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2018 includes references to locally designated sites for biodiversity & geodiversity (Paragraph s 174 & 175). The identification of Local Sites enables the Local Planning Authority, in this case Rochford District Council, to comply with the NPPF requirements.

This report has been prepared by Place Services on behalf of Rochford District Council. Its principal aim is to provide up to date and easily accessible information on sites of biodiversity value within Rochford District; updating the evidence base is required to support the emerging Local Plan and development management decisions in the future. It also provides recommendations for management which should be used to inform landowners and managers how the Sites' value to biodiversity can be conserved and enhanced. This in turn can increase the percentage of Local Sites in Positive Conservation Management,

It has been based on the 2007 Register of Local Wildlife Sites in Rochford District (EECOS, 2007) and consultation responses from local biodiversity groups and organisations involved in management of land within the District (see Appendix 4).

Identification of land within this report as a Local Wildlife Site does not confer any right of public access to the Site, above and beyond any Public Rights of Way that may exist. The vast majority of the Sites are in private ownership and this should be respected at all times. Those few Sites that are described as being appropriate for environmental education already have some level of public access.

Whilst every attempt has been made to ensure accurate mapping of the site boundaries, the accompanying maps should be considered as being illustrative only.

1.2 Rochford District Local Plan

Rochford District Council (DC) is renewing its Local Plan which includes a policy to afford Local Sites protection from development proposals. By reference to this report as part of the evidence base, Rochford DC has a robust baseline for conserving and enhancing Local Sites within its geographical area.

The review of LoWS in Rochford District is intended to provide an updated evidence base document on species and habitats of local significance to support the preparation of the new Local Plan and applications of its policies for development management purposes.

2. Review of Local Wildlife Sites in Rochford District

The scope of the review included the 39 sites already designated as Local Wildlife Sites (LoWS), ten sites deleted at the time of the previous LoWS review in 2007, five additional sites identified by Rochford DC and four sites suggested by consultees or by surveyors themselves.

A team of qualified ecologists with previous experience of LoWS identification and review carried out site surveys at the best time of year for each habitat and assessed them against the most up to date Essex LoWS criteria (2016) provided by the Essex Local Sites Partnership (ELSP). Following consultation with local biodiversity groups and organisations, their specialist knowledge has been integrated into this review as has information relating to both existing LoWS and those with potential to meet the attached designation criteria.

Each site was assigned a level of access – a) Full access available, b) Partial access available e.g. due to multiple ownership or other constraint or c) Only indirect access available, *i.e.* view from public footpath or aerial photographs.

As ownership information was limited, some surveys were carried out from public footpaths, or where the landowners were obvious, they were approached for permission in advance or at the time of the site visit. In

most cases, the review has been based on a single visit to each site which means that inevitably some features of some sites were not visible.

In line with national guidance on Local Sites, areas which have been designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for the same features, have not been included in this Local Wildlife Sites register.

The previous LoWS review undertaken in 2007, culminated in the selection of 39 sites totalling 358.3 hectares (ha) of Local Wildlife Site land, a net increase of 115.9 ha, but removed five sites which no longer met the Selection Criteria. This review has confirmed 38 out of the 39 existing LoWS still meet the criteria for designation. It also proposes to delete one and recommends that eight new sites are added to the LoWS Register for Rochford District. The total area of land designated as LoWS is now 770.9 ha, a further increase of 412.6 ha due to the addition of recently created habitat at Wallasea Island Extension, despite the removal of Doggetts Pond (seven ha).

A copy of each LoWS notification sheet will be supplied to the ELSP to endorse the recommendations for retention, deletion or inclusion within the Register for Rochford District. The ELSP will then update the county register and endeavour to circulate the updated register to all relevant statutory and non-statutory organisations.

3. Survey methodology and criteria for assessment

Since their original identification in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Essex LoWS have typically been selected as part of borough, district or unitary authority 'reviews' commissioned by the relevant local authority. The LoWS Selection Criteria document aims to ensure all LoWS reviews in Essex follow a standard '5 step' approach (see below), which is consistent with national guidance.

The survey methodology for this LoWS review used a pool of seven consultants, from both ecological and planning disciplines for pre-field work arrangements, such as securing access, assembling existing data and clarifying the review criteria to ensure evidence is fit for purpose, and to carry out effective site surveys and assessments of habitats and species on the sites identified for this contract.

The review followed the LoWS Review '5 step' Process as described in the 2010 Essex LoWS selection criteria, with enhancements to focus survey effort. Information from the Rochford LoWS Review (2007) was used as a baseline, adding up to date information for each site. The five steps (A-E) were followed, as set out below, to deliver an appropriately detailed survey:

- A. All sites were checked for access information with Essex LoWS Partnership and local consultees, and for sites where access was not full/public or unknown, Rochford DC provided a legal 'Notice of Entry' letter of authorisation to ecological surveyors, for the purpose of surveying, consistent with their powers under s.324 of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990). To avoid a considerable amount of time being spent trying to identify landowners, each site was assigned a level of access – a) Full access available, b) Partial access available, e.g. due to multiple ownership or other constraint, or c) Only indirect access available, *i.e.* view from public footpath or aerial photographs. Where a survey was constrained by either b) or c), this was noted and reviewed over the contract period with follow up visits being undertaken where the category of access changed.
- B. The planning context for each site will be checked against the Core Strategy (2011), Development Management Plan (2014) and Allocations Plan (2014) which form principal components of Rochford District Council's local development plan. This is considered necessary to support the inclusion of LoWS in the emerging Local Plan and provide an up-to-date, robust source of evidence allowing Rochford DC to defend them and relevant policies at future consultation stage and at the Local Plan's Examination in Public (EiP).
- C. Local knowledge to inform site visits was requested from local specialist interest groups consulted, including the County recorders and a list of groups is included in Appendix 5. The review provides a standardised approach to screening all sites considered for the likely presence of Priority, and Red Data Book, species.

- D. A full technical review of ecological data to support the planning requirements has been undertaken by Place Services Principal Planning Consultant to ensure that time is not wasted on visiting sites which have minimal likelihood of meeting the LoWS designation criteria. It should be noted that sites which were deleted from the Register at the time of the 2007 review may now meet different criteria from those at the time of designation.
- E. Effective survey visits by ecological consultants were supported by a pack of information for each site to include a summary of the updated desktop data to provide focus on the product required. Induction training by the Lead Surveyor included survey protocol, standard setting of surveys and use of the LoWS monitoring form to streamline the data handling after visits. It clarified triggers for requesting additional support from the survey team eg for large or constrained sites. All sites were visited at an appropriate time of the ecological survey season and surveyors used their expert knowledge to identify habitats present and note any that were not recorded in 2007. Their condition was assessed, as was their suitability to support identified species or species-groups. Photos were taken on site and confirmation of identification was provided by the Lead Surveyor remotely with all records collated. This provided quality control on decisions as to whether a LoWS has improved or declined, and if it should continue to be identified as a LoWS. Management advice has been provided to update that in the 2007 review, for those LoWS which are recommended to be retained.

4. LoWS site descriptions

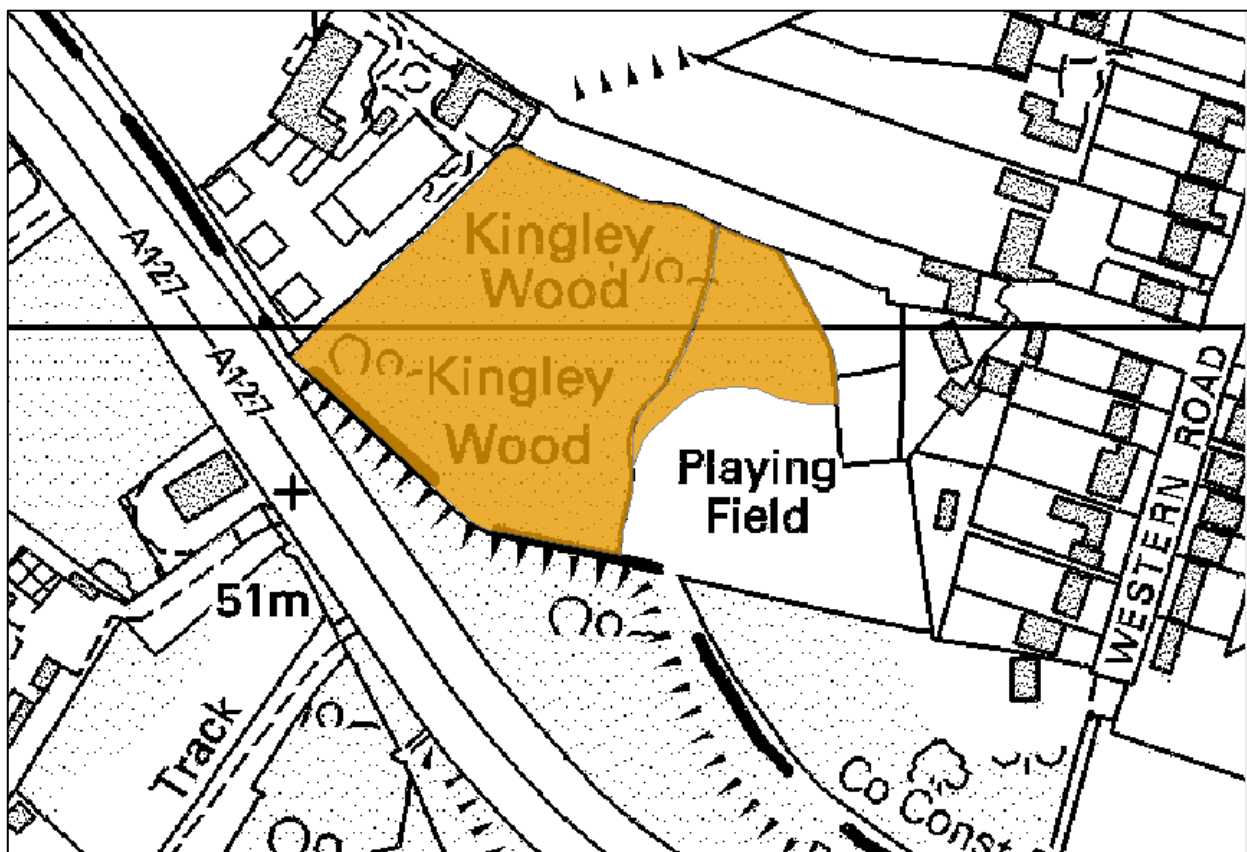
Rochford Local Wildlife Site Description

Site reference: R1	Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TQ 794900
Site name: Kingley Wood, Rayleigh	Site area: 1.7 ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC1 – Ancient Woodland Sites
- HC2 – Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites

Boundary Map



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Site Description

This is a small and largely ancient wood, on a series of slopes and terraces with a westerly aspect. The secondary section to the east is not easily distinguished on the ground.

The canopy varies, being predominantly Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) coppice at the top of the slope and Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) coppice and standards lower down. There are some Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) standards mid slope with Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) standards on the lower terrace.

The understorey is primarily Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and Elder (*Sambucus nigra*) with some Elm (*Ulmus* sp.), Hazel (*Corylus avellana*), Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) and Yew (*Taxus baccata*).

The ground flora is dominated in parts by Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) and Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) with Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), Yellow archangel (*Lamium galeobdolon*) Common Cow-wheat (*Melampyrum pratense*), Three-nerved Sandwort (*Moehringia trinervia*), Wood Millet (*Milium effusum*) and Creeping Soft-grass (*Holcus mollis*). Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) and Hop (*Humulus lupulus*) are present on the eastern edge.

Site Selection Rationale

The ancient status of most of this wood is well documented and so the HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites can be confidently applied. Small sections of the site are equally well documented as more recent, but have good structure and species composition and so the HC2 Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites is also justified.

Priority Habitats (Habitats of Principal Importance in England)

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Ownership and Access

The site is owned and managed by Rochford District Council with full public access.

Condition Statement

Good, stable

Management Issues

There is little evidence of recent management, which will eventually lead to a decline in condition. The non-natives Cherry Laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*) and Norway Maple (*Acer platanoides*) are present and may adversely affect the composition of the wood, if allowed to spread.

Review Schedule

Site selected: 1993

Site Reviewed: October 2007, no change
April 2017, no change

Rochford Local Wildlife Site Description

Site reference: R2

Site name: Hullbridge Road Meadow, Hullbridge

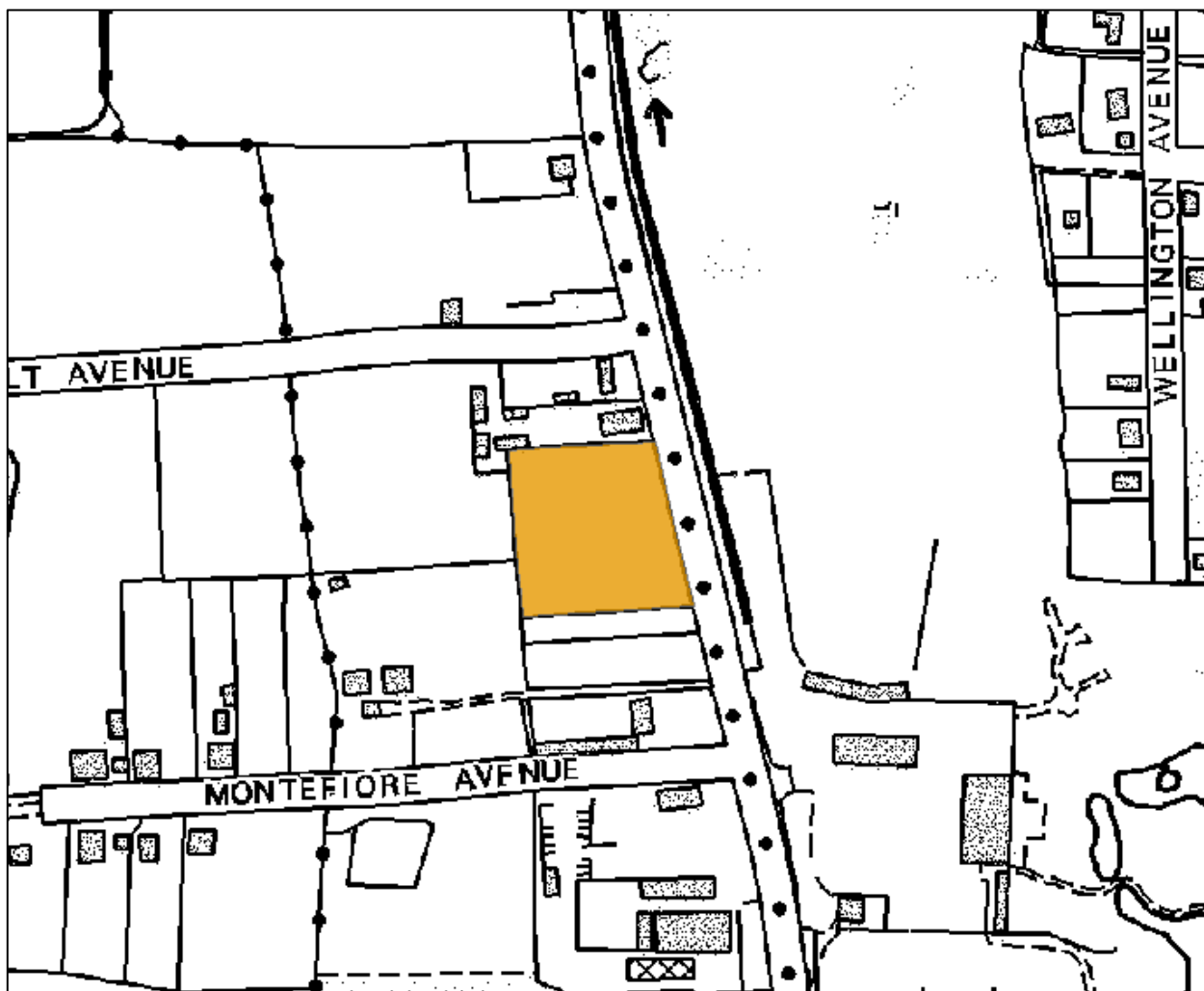
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TQ806937

Site area: 0.6ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC9 Lowland Meadows

Boundary Map



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Site Description

This old meadow does not appear to have been agriculturally improved, one of very few such grassland sites in the District.

The sward includes Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*), Sweet Vernal Grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*) and Meadow Foxtail (*Alopecurus pratensis*) with Common Bird's-foot-trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), Meadow Buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*), Perforate St John's-wort (*Hypericum perforatum*) and Oxeye Daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*). Green-winged Orchid (*Orchis morio*) has been recorded.

Site Selection Rationale

The vegetation present conforms to the National Vegetation Classification MG5 community, as required for the Lowland Meadows Habitat of Principal Importance in England description and so the HC9 Lowland Meadows criterion is applicable.

Priority Habitats (Habitats of Principal Importance in England)

Lowland meadows

Ownership and Access

This site is privately owned with no public access.

Condition Statement

Moderate, stable

Management Issues

The current horse-grazing management is not ideal for the community present, but does maintain the integrity of the sward. There is some very minor scrub invasion around the margins of the meadow.

Review Schedule

Site selected: October 2007

Site Reviewed: July 2017, no change

Rochford Local Wildlife Site Description

Site reference: R3

Site name: Blounts Wood, Rayleigh

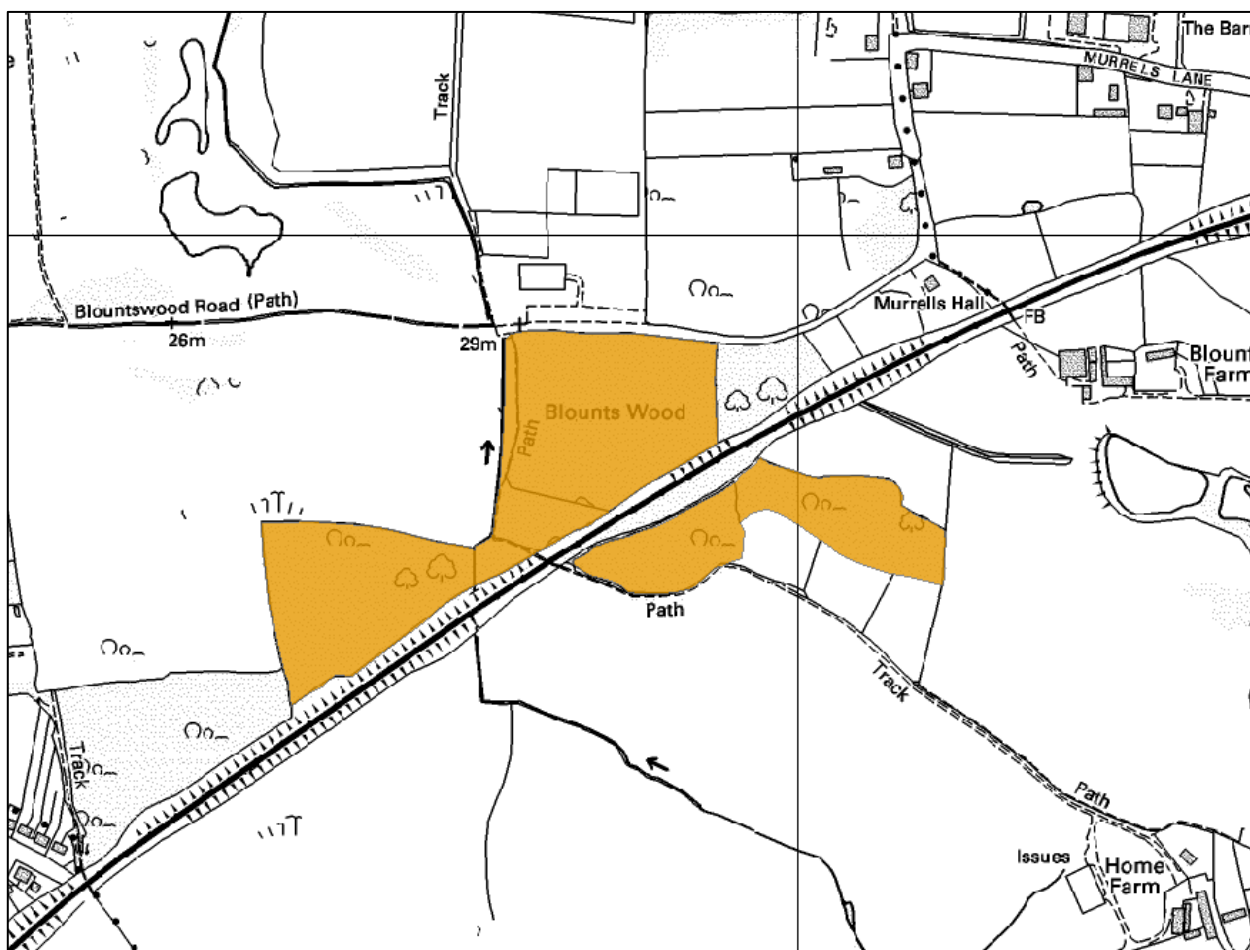
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TQ818927

Site area: 7.5 ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites
- HC2 Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites
- SC18 Invertebrates Listed as Species of Principal Importance in England

Boundary Map



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Site Description

This site is made up of a core of ancient woodland, split by a railway line at the end of the 19th Century, with surrounding secondary woodland dating from the early 20th Century.

The ancient part of the site contains relatively few and young Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) standards and some Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) standards, with Hornbeam and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) coppice stools, some of the latter now singled.

The understorey includes Wild Service (*Sorbus torminalis*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Midland Hawthorn (*Crataegus laevigata*), Field Maple (*Acer campestre*), Hazel (*Corylus avellana*), Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*), Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) and Buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*).

The ground flora includes Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), Yellow archangel (*Lamium galeobdolon*), Enchanter's-nightshade (*Circaea lutetiana*), Pendulous Sedge (*Carex pendula*), Wood Melick (*Melica uniflora*), Wood Millet (*Milium effusum*), Wood Sedge (*Carex sylvatica*), Remote Sedge (*Carex remota*), Broad-leaved Helleborine (*Epipactis helleborine*), Hart's-tongue

(*Asplenium scolopendrium*) and Three-veined Sandwort (*Moehringia trinervia*).

The secondary parts of the wood are similar in composition, though lacking Hornbeam and with more prominent Elder in the understorey. Their ground flora includes some ancient woodland indicators that have colonised from the ancient part of the site, or were associated with older hedgerows incorporated into them, but in general they are less diverse.

Southern Wood Ants (*Formica rufa*) are present north of the railway line, with several active nests.

Site Selection Rationale

From map and documentary evidence, and the presence of a range of indicator species, the core of Blounts Wood can be shown to be ancient, allowing the use of the HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites criterion. The secondary woodland areas range in age from 50 to 100 years, but have good structural diversity and are semi-natural, being composed entirely of locally native species. They are judged to meet the requirements of the Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland Habitat of Principal Importance in England justifying the use of the HC2 Lowland Mixed deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites criterion. They also serve as a buffer to the ancient woodland, supporting and increasing its value.

The presence of a population of Wood Ants justifies the inclusion of the SC18 Invertebrates Listed as Species of Principal Importance in England criterion.

Priority Habitats (Habitats of Principal Importance in England)

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Ownership and Access

Ownership is unknown, but the site is believed to be private. A public footpath runs along the northern and western edges of the ancient woodland part of the site, crossing the railway and passing along the southern boundary.

Condition Statement

Good, stable

Management Issues

There is no evidence of conservation management within the wood. Horses are able to graze within the woodland south of the railway line, which is having an impact on the ground flora and understorey there. A small amount of Cherry Laurel is present within the western, most recent section of the site.

Review Schedule

Site selected: 1993

Site Reviewed: October 2007, no change
July 2013, secondary woodland areas added

Rochford Local Wildlife Site Description

Site reference: R4

Site name: Hockley Woods Complex, Hockley

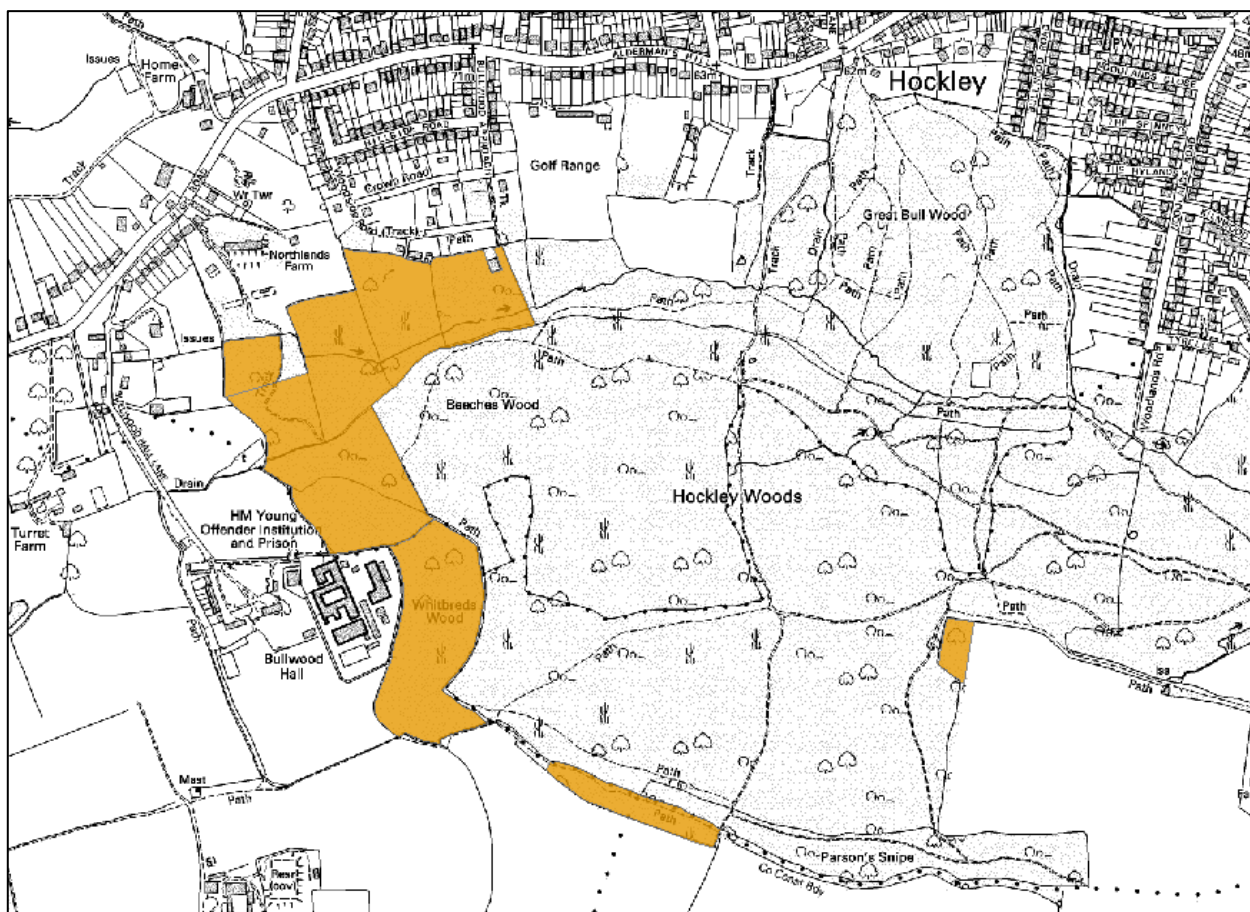
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TQ 826918

Site area: 14.9 ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC1 – Ancient Woodland Sites
- HC2 – Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites

Boundary Map



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Site Description

These woodlands are part of a complex of ancient and non-ancient woodland found on the margins of Hockley Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Most of the site is located on the west and north sides of the SSSI, but there are also two small fragments on the southern and eastern edges.

To the north of Beeches Wood are a series of ancient blocks mainly dominated by Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) coppice interspersed with Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) standards. Other trees to be found include birch (*Betula* sp.) and Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*). A generally sparse shrub canopy includes Midland Hawthorn (*Crataegus laevigata*), Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) and Hazel (*Corylus avellana*). Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) dominates large areas of the ground flora, which also includes Moschatel (*Adoxa moschatellina*) and Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*). The Guide Woods area is particularly lacking in shrub structure and has areas of bare ground and sparsely vegetated ground, but does contain Butcher's Broom (*Ruscus aculeatus*).

The ancient, former borstal section, Little Bull Wood, is dominated by Sweet Chestnut and birch over Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) and Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*). The area to the north of Little Bull Wood, which is part of Beeches Wood, is more diverse, with Pedunculate Oak, Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Hornbeam and Holly. Bluebell is found in the southern part of this section and there are small patches of Wood Anemone,

Greater Wood-rush (*Luzula sylvatica*) and Sanicle (*Sanicula europaea*) in the ground flora.

The ancient Whitbreds Wood has a canopy dominated by Sweet Chestnut, Hornbeam, Pedunculate Oak, Sessile Oak (*Quercus petraea*) and birch. Wild Service Tree (*Sorbus torminalis*) occurs amongst the canopy and the ground flora is dominated by Bramble but with Bluebell and Wood Anemone also present.

South of the Hockley Woods SSSI is a narrow slither of more recent woodland. This old plantation is dominated by Sweet Chestnut coppice with some younger Hornbeam and standards of Pedunculate Oak. Holly and Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) are the predominant understorey species. The ground flora is typified by Bramble. Bracken and Creeping-Soft-grass (*Holcus mollis*) are also present, as well as small colonies of Bluebell and Wood Anemone, which is usually confined to ancient woodland.

On the east edge of the SSSI is a small block of recent woodland dominated by Pedunculate Oak standards with Hornbeam over an open understorey of Hawthorn and Elder (*Sambucus nigra*). The ground flora is typified by species such as Bugle (*Ajuga reptans*), False-brome (*Brachypodium sylvaticum*), Wood Melick (*Melica uniflora*) and violets (*Viola* sp.).

Site Selection Rationale

From map and documentary evidence, and the presence of a range of indicator species, Hockley Woods can be shown to be ancient, allowing the use of the HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites criterion. Secondary woodland areas have a reasonable structural diversity and are composed of locally native species and so meet the requirements of the Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland Priority Habitat justifying the use of the HC2 Lowland Mixed deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites criterion.

Priority Habitats (Habitats of Principal Importance in England)

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Ownership and Access

The majority of this site is in private ownership with no public access. The narrow strip to the south and the fragment to the east are part of the main area of woodland open space, maintained by Rochford District Council.

Condition Statement

Generally good, stable

Management Issues

The privately owned parts of the site show little evidence of conservation management, but are generally stable. Some sections are declining due to heavy recreational use, causing deterioration of the ground flora and overall structure. The general lack of active management, and particularly coppicing, will eventually result in a decline in diversity. There is evidence of garden management encroaching into the woodland.

Review Schedule

Site selected: 1993

Site reviewed: October 2007, no change
July 2017, no change

Rochford Local Wildlife Site Description

Site reference: R5

Site name: Grove Woods, Rayleigh

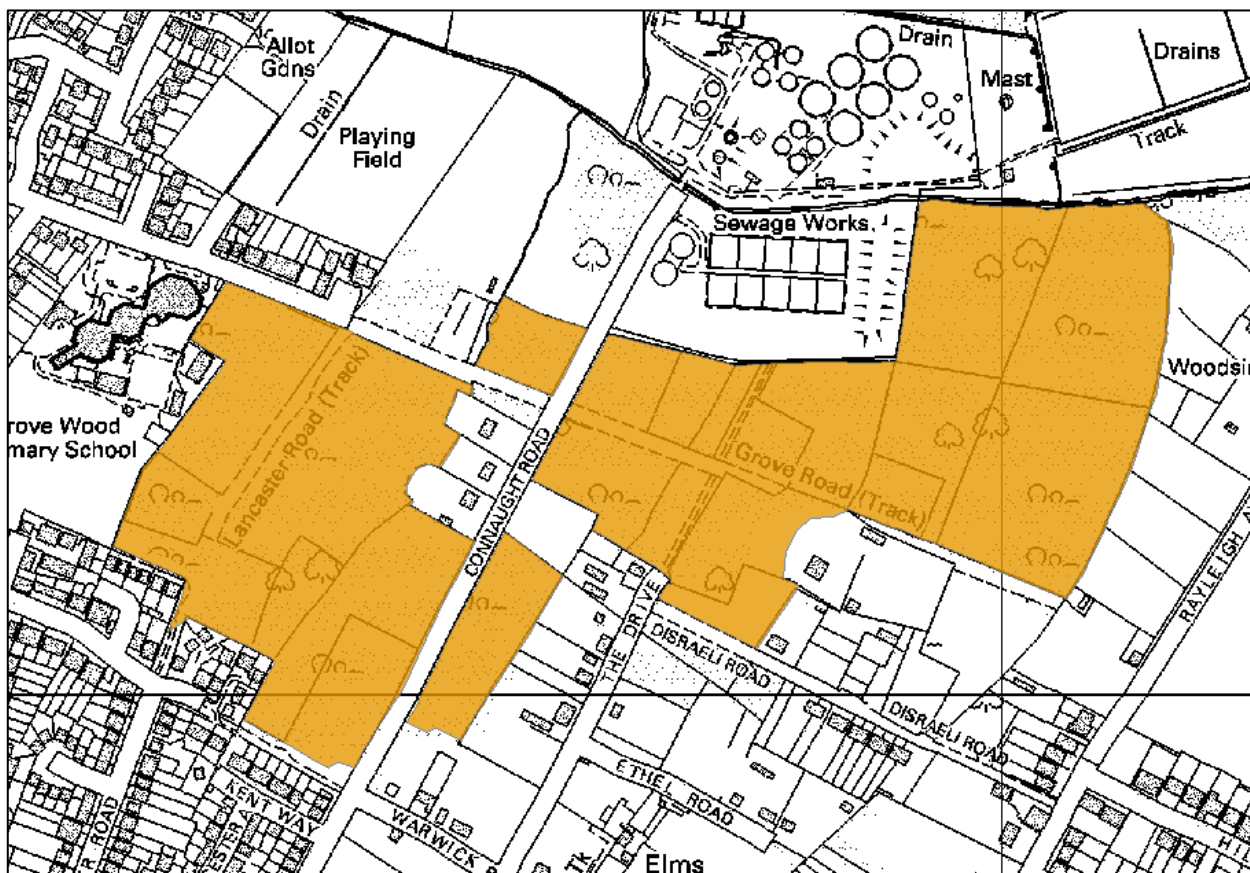
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TQ 827902

Site area: 16.6 ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC2 Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites

Boundary Map



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Site Description

Grove Woods comprise secondary woodland on former plotland, its structure and diversity probably benefitting from old hedges that pre-existed the plotland. The northeast corner of the site adjoins R10 New England Wood, which in turn connects to R40 Cherry Orchard Country Park and other LoWS to form a significant ecological corridor along the River Roach valley.

The site is dominated by Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) scrub under a canopy of Ivy (*Hedera helix*) clad Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*), amongst which a wide variety of other woody species can be found, including Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) and Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*). Oak and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) regeneration is apparent in the north-eastern extent of the site.

A wide variety of ground flora typical of secondary woodland is present in places, including Wood Avens (*Geum urbanum*), Herb Robert (*Geranium robertianum*), Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*) and Cow Parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*). More interesting species such as Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Moschatel (*Adoxa moschatellina*) and Yellow Archangel (*Lamium galeobdolon*) are present, albeit in limited numbers.

Site Selection Rationale

Old maps show that the woodland here only dates from the mid-20th Century, but the structure and diversity

are sufficiently established to apply the HC2 Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites criterion.

Priority Habitats (Habitats of Principal Importance in England)

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Ownership and Access

Ownership is varied with Rochford District Council owning parts, but some blocks are privately owned. Public access is possible via the regular network of roads and tracks that cross the site.

Condition Statement

Poor, declining

Management Issues

The site is subject to heavy public use with damage to ground flora, erosion and compaction from the proliferation and widening of paths. Particular damage is associated with the construction of an unofficial bike track. There is a lack of conservation management, the canopy becoming dense and even-aged in places, suppressing the establishment of ground flora. Some invasive non-native species are present including a cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster* sp.) and Cherry Laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*).

Review Schedule

Site selected: 1993

Site Reviewed: October 2007, no change
July 2017, no change

Rochford Local Wildlife Site Description

Site reference: R6

Site name: Rawreth Hall Wood, Rayleigh

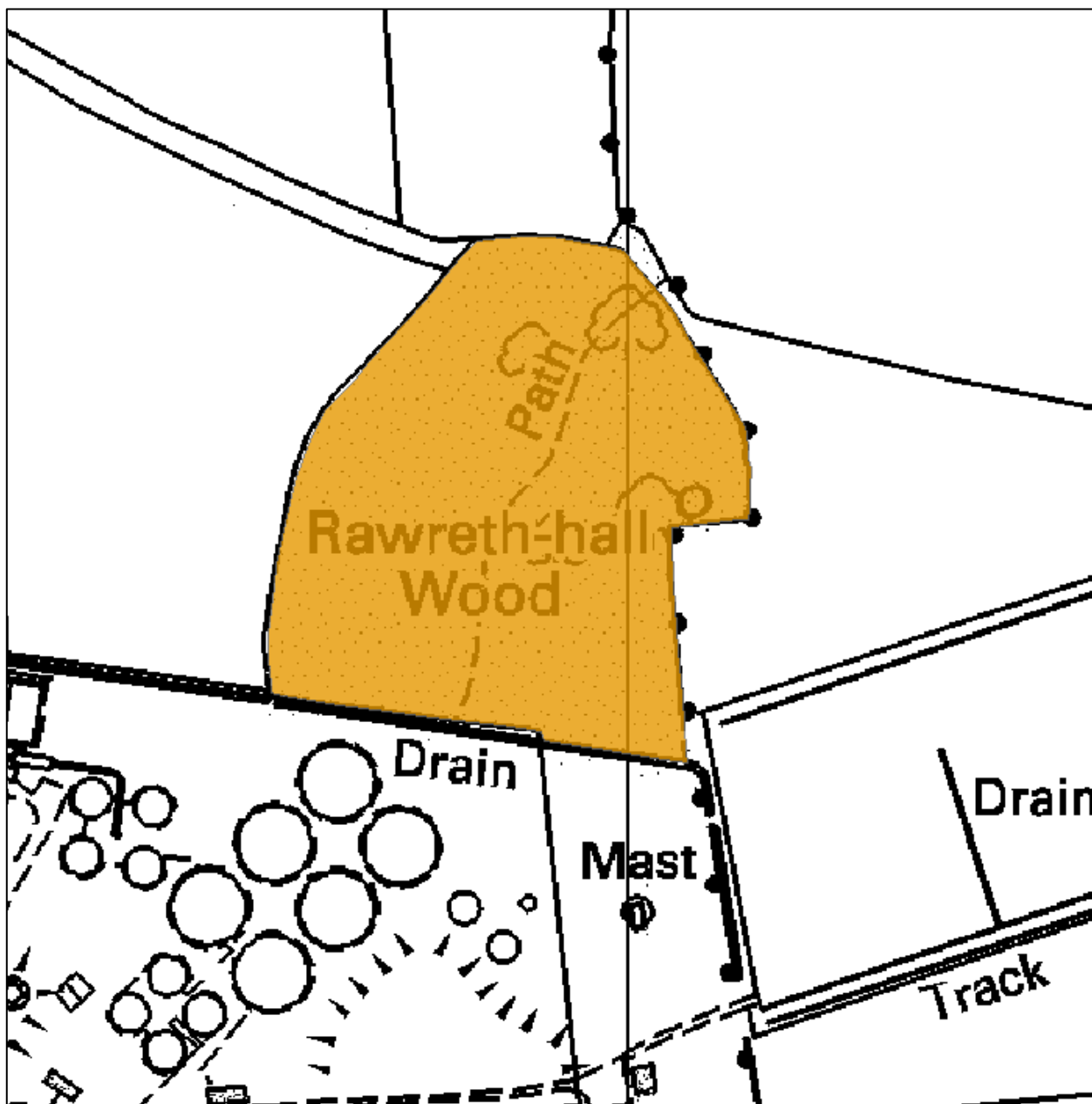
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TQ 829905

Site area: 2.1ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

Boundary Map



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Site Description

This ancient wood is dominated by old Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) coppice with standards of both Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) and Sessile Oak (*Q. petraea*). Wild Service Tree (*Sorbus torminalis*) is also present. Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), Elder (*Sambucus nigra*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and Midland Hawthorn (*C. laevigata*) form the scrub layer with some Field Maple (*Acer campestre*).

Though there is much Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) the ground flora is moderately rich, with Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), Wood Millet (*Milium effusum*), Wood Melick (*Melica uniflora*), Wood Meadow-grass (*Poa nemoralis*), Three-nerved Sandwort (*Moehringia*

trinervia), Creeping Soft-grass (*Holcus mollis*) and Honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*).

This site sits within a cluster of LoWS, including other ancient woodlands, along the valley of the River Roach between Rayleigh and Rochford.

Site Selection Rationale

The site is mapped as being ancient on the Essex Ancient Woodland Inventory and this is supported by the presence of a range of ancient woodland indicator species, allowing the use of the HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites criterion.

Priority Habitats (Habitats of Principal Importance in England)

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Ownership and Access

Ownership is unknown, but the site is believed to be private. A public footpath crosses the site from north to south.

Condition Statement

Good, stable

Management Issues

Bramble is encroaching in the centre of the site and the ground flora is impoverished as a result. There has been some recent coppicing.

Review Schedule

Site selected: 1993

Site Reviewed: October 2007, no change
July 2017, no change

Rochford Local Wildlife Site Description

Site reference: R7

Site name: Brandy Hole Marsh Extension, Hullbridge

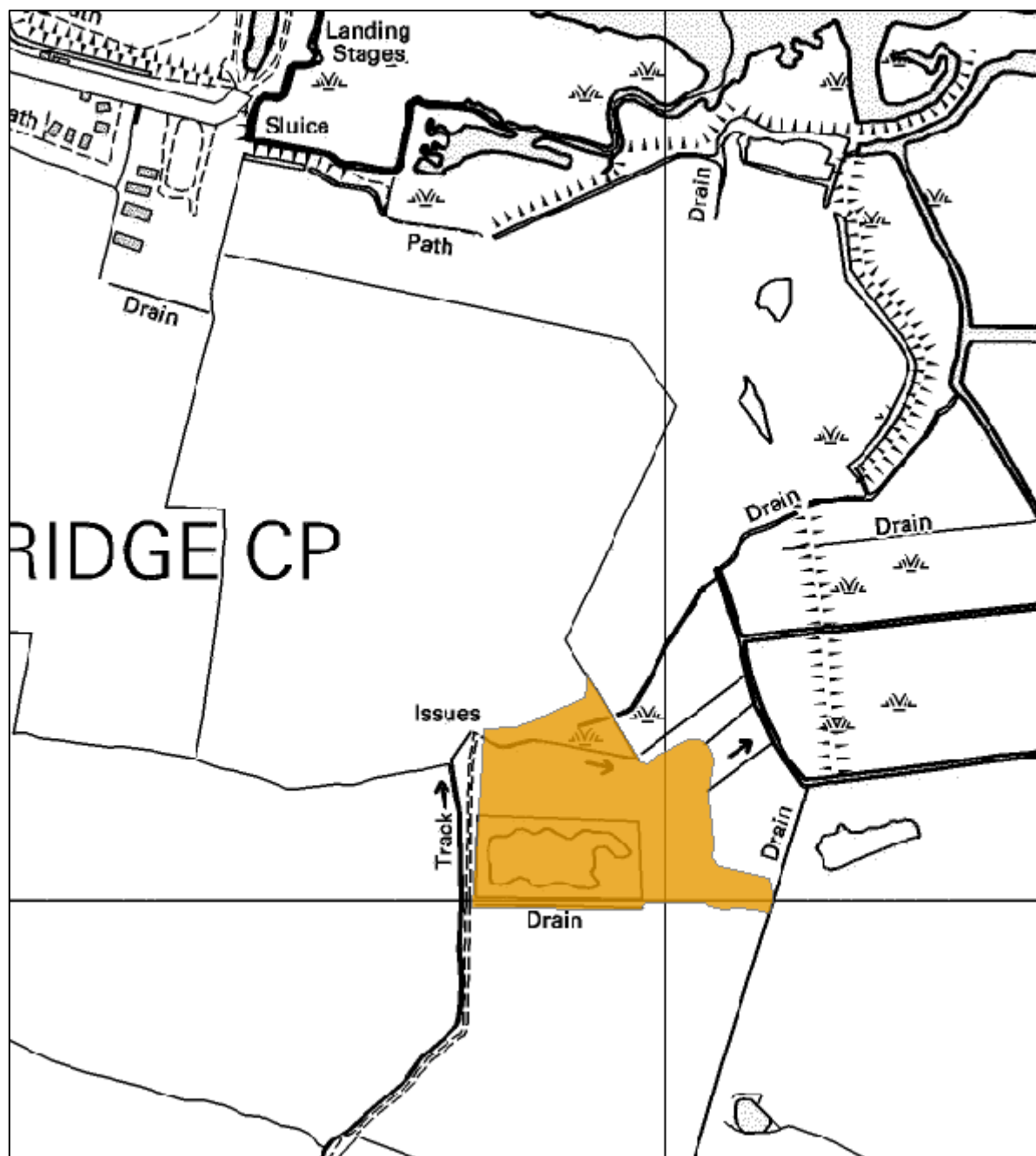
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TQ 830953

Site area: 2.6 ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC22 Tidal Transition Zones
- HC23 Saltmarsh and Mudflats

Boundary Map



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Site Description

This site includes the remaining intertidal areas and associated coastal habitats outside of the newly extended Crouch and Roach Estuaries SSSI. Parts of this area show a natural transition from saltmarsh to grassland with adjoining arable fields.

The site consists of middle saltmarsh communities grading through upper saltmarsh and coastal grassland

communities to rough grassland with scrub. It includes a large, newly created water body with Sea Club-rush (*Bolboschoenus maritimus*) and Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) fringes.

The middle saltmarsh is dominated by Sea-purslane (*Atriplex portulacoides*) with Common Sea-lavender (*Limonium vulgare*), Common Saltmarsh-grass (*Puccinellia maritima*) and Sea Aster (*Aster tripolium*). The middle marsh grades into upper marsh Sea Couch-grass (*Elytrigia atherica*) grassland that includes Salsify (*Tragopogon porrifolius*), Wild Carrot (*Daucus carota*), Narrow-leaved Bird's-foot Trefoil (*Lotus glaber*), Grass Vetchling (*Lathyrus nissolia*), Fleabane (*Pulicaria dysenterica*), and Smooth Tare (*Vicia tetrasperma*) with spreading Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) and Blackthorn (*Prunus spinose*) scrub.

In the southeast corner of the site is a small fragment of remnant grazing marsh, situated on either side of a drainage ditch. This area, only a few square metres in extent, holds Spiny Restharrow (*Ononis spinosa*), Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), Meadow Vetchling (*Lathyrus pratensis*) and Oxeye Daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*).

There are populations of Water Vole and Common Lizard on and adjacent to the site.

Site Selection Rationale

Part of the site is inter-tidal, with vegetation consistent with the Coastal Saltmarsh Habitat of Principal Importance in England definition, justifying the HC23 Saltmarsh and Mudflats criterion. As the site shows an unconstrained transition from saltmarsh to terrestrial habitats, the HC22 Tidal Transition Zones criterion should also be applied, extending the site to the boundary with the adjacent cultivated land.

Priority Habitats (Habitats of Principal Importance in England)

Coastal Saltmarsh

Ownership and Access

The site is managed for wildfowling by the Blackwater Wildfowlers Association, who own adjacent parts of Brandyhole Marsh.

Condition Statement

Good

Management Issues

Much of the site requires no management, although the dominance of coarse grasses in the higher parts, and invasion by scrub species suggest that management pressure is not currently sufficient.

Review Schedule

Site selected: October 2007

Site Reviewed: July 2017, additionally designated SSSI land removed, minor boundary changes

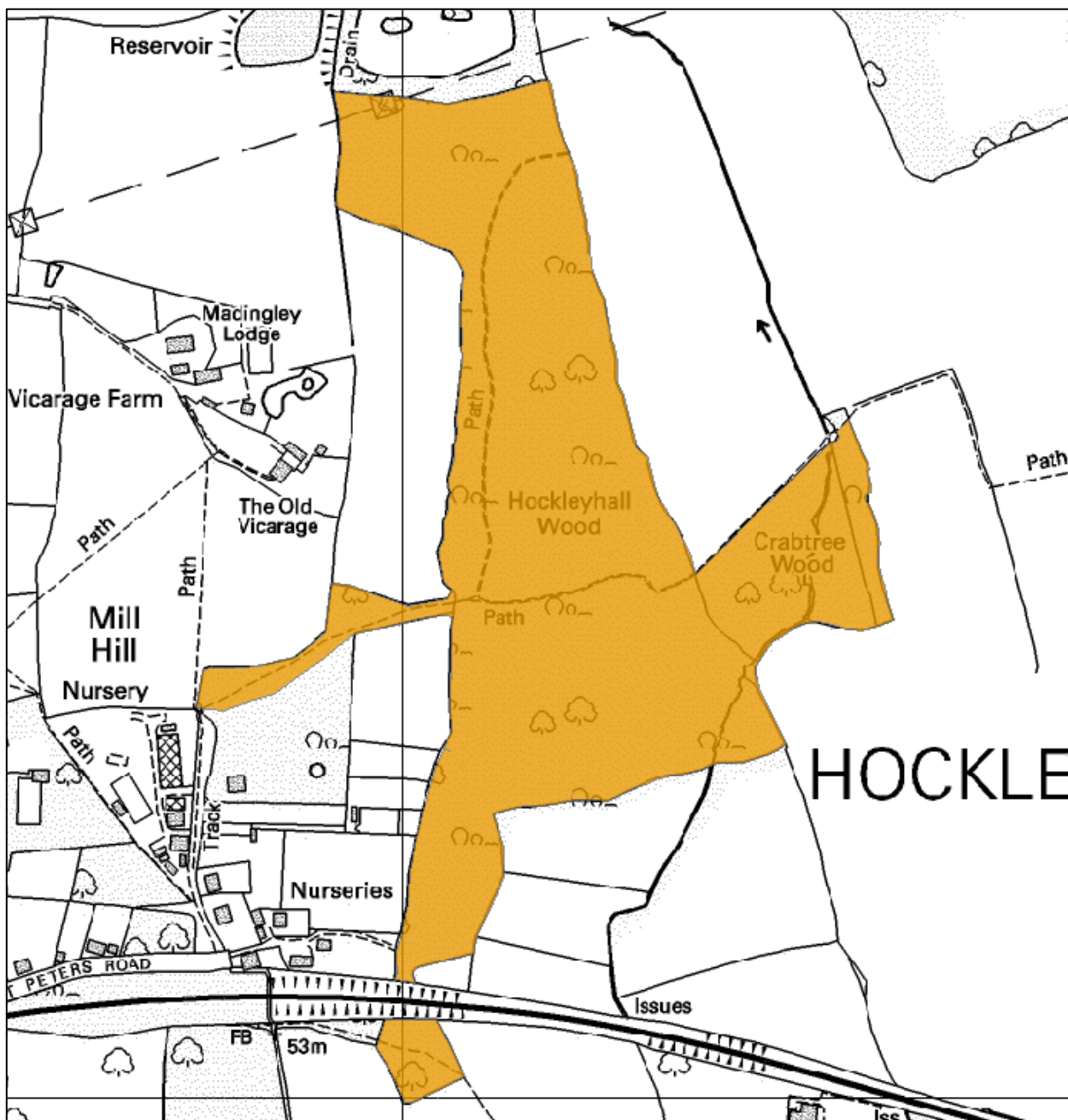
Rochford Local Wildlife Site Description

Site reference: R8	Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TQ 832934
Site name: Hockleyhall and Crabtree Woods, Hockley	Site area: 15.5 ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites
- HC2 Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites
- SC18 Invertebrates listed as Species of Principal Importance in England

Boundary Map



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Site Description

The majority of this site is well documented as either ancient or near-ancient woodland, but with some recent woodland to the west and a small strip of recent wood to the east of Crabtree Wood. A small fragment of ancient wood at the southern end was separated from the main block by the construction of the railway line.

Both Hockleyhall and Crabtree Woods are dominated by old Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) coppice, with some Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*). Standards are largely Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) but with scattered Sessile Oak (*Quercus petraea*), Hornbeam and Wild Service Tree (*Sorbus torminalis*). The understorey includes Field Maple (*Acer campestre*), Midland Hawthorn (*Crataegus laevigata*) and Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*).

Much of the ground flora is dominated by Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.), with areas of Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) and Wood Millet (*Milium effusum*), and locally frequent patches of Wood Melick (*Melica uniflora*) and Creeping-Soft-grass (*Holcus mollis*). Other species include Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*), Three-nerved Sandwort (*Moehringia trinervia*), Honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*) and Hairy St. John's-wort (*Hypericum hirsutum*).

There are several active nests of Southern Wood Ants (*Formica rufa*).

To the west, the more recent woodland is derived from old hedgerows and contains several mature Pedunculate Oak standards and pollards.

Site Selection Rationale

From map and documentary evidence and the presence of a range of indicator species Crabtree Wood and the majority of Hockleyhall Wood can be shown to be ancient, allowing the use of the HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites criterion. A block within Hockleyhall Wood is known to date to 1700 and is indistinguishable from the ancient habitat, so the HC2 Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites criterion is used to include this area. The more recent secondary areas of woodland have good structural diversity and are composed of locally native species, so are also judged to meet the requirements of HC2.

The presence of a population of Wood Ants justifies the inclusion of the SC18 Invertebrates Listed as Species of Principal Importance in England criterion.

Priority Habitats (Habitats of Principal Importance in England)

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Ownership and Access

Ownership is unknown, but the site is believed to be private. A public footpath runs through the section south of the railway line and another crosses west to east though the main site.

Condition Statement

Good, stable

Management Issues

There is no evidence of conservation management within the wood and dense shading limits the diversity of the ground flora. There was some evidence that shooting occurs. Some Cherry Laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*), a non-native and damaging species, is present.

Review Schedule

Site selected: 1993

Site Reviewed: October 2007, no change

July 2017, additional secondary woodland to the west added

Rochford Local Wildlife Site Description

Site reference: R9

Site name: Folly Wood, Hockley

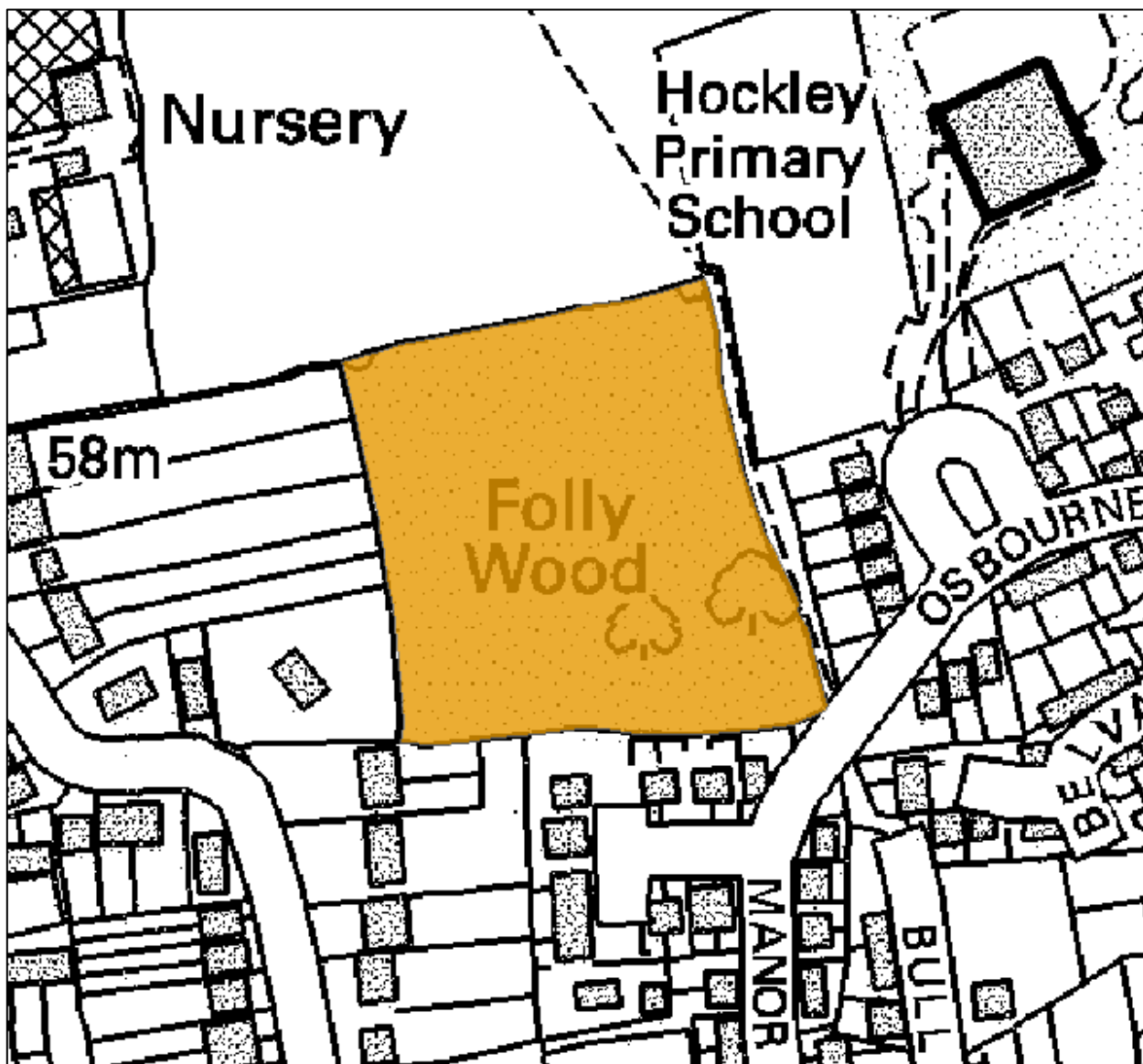
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TQ 832926

Site area: 1.4 ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

Boundary Map



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Site Description

This ancient wood is largely made up of Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) coppice with standards of both Pedunculate and Sessile Oak (*Quercus robur* and *Q. petraea*) and an understorey of Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) and Elder (*Sambucus nigra*).

There is some Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and Wild Service (*Sorbus torminalis*) in the northwest, while the understorey in the northern end and along the eastern boundary also includes Hazel (*Corylus avellana*), elm (*Ulmus*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and Field Maple (*Acer campestre*).

The ground flora is dominated by Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) with Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), Wood Melick (*Melica uniflora*) and Pendulous Sedge (*Carex pendula*). Butcher's Broom (*Ruscus aculeatus*) and Wood Millet (*Milium effusum*) have also been recorded.

Site Selection Rationale

Documentary evidence and species composition show that Folly Wood is ancient, allowing the use of the HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites criterion.

Priority Habitats (Habitats of Principal Importance in England)

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Ownership and Access

The site is believed to be in private ownership and there is no public access. A public footpath leading from Osbourne Avenue/ Manor Road follows the eastern boundary, from which the wood can be viewed.

Condition Statement

Good, Stable

Management Issues

There is no evidence of recent conservation management. Encroachment from adjacent gardens and the deposition of garden waste has had a negative impact on the habitat. Some Cherry Laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*), a non-native and damaging species, is present.

Review Schedule

Site selected: 1993

Site Reviewed: October 2007, no change
July 2017, no change

Rochford Local Wildlife Site Description

Site reference: R10

Site name: New England Wood, Rayleigh

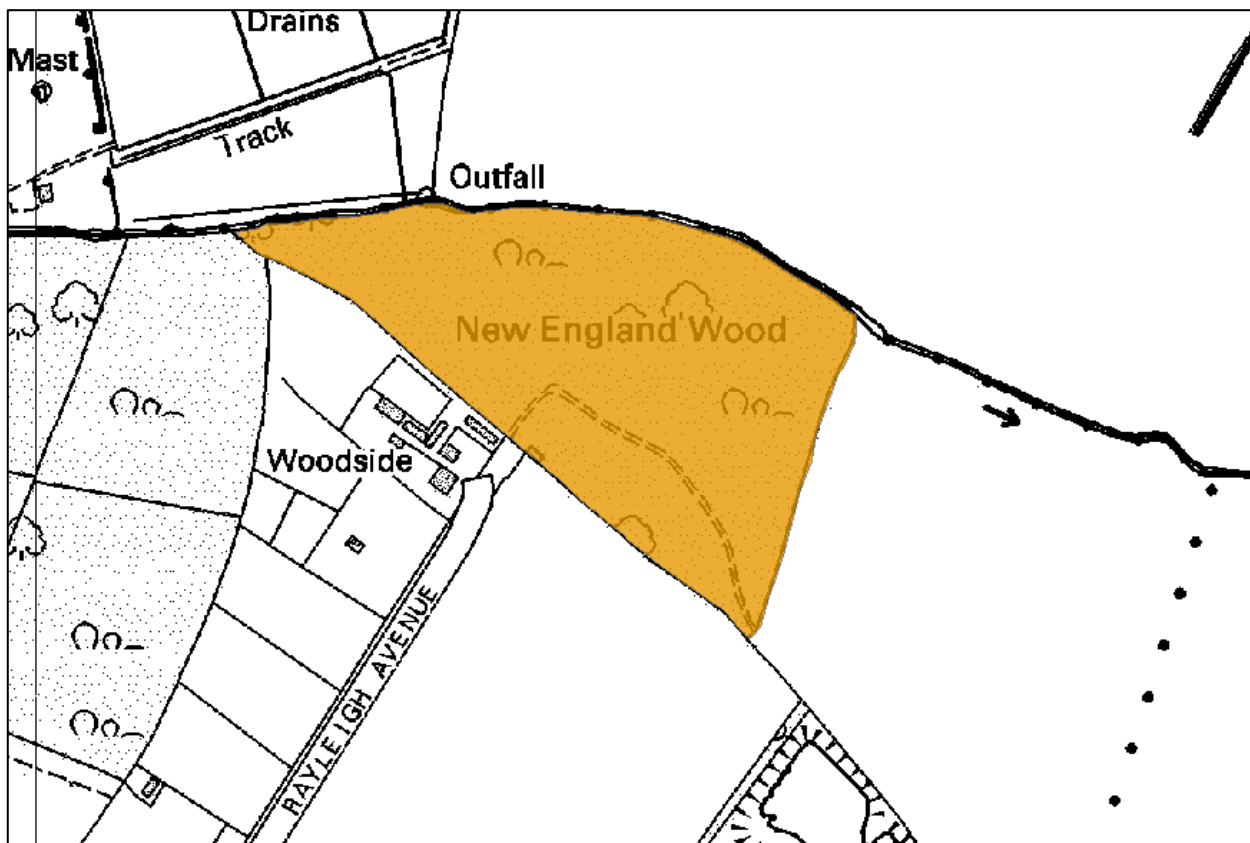
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TQ 833903

Site area: 4 ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites
- SC18 Invertebrates Listed as Species of Principal Importance in England

Boundary Map



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Site Description

New England Wood is an ancient wood dominated by old Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) coppice with standards of Sessile and Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus petraea* and *Q. robur*) and small amounts of Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*).

The understorey includes Hazel (*Corylus avellana*), Aspen (*Populus tremula*), Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) and Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*).

The diverse ground flora includes Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), Creeping Soft-grass (*Holcus mollis*), Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*) and Yellow Archangel (*Lamium galeobdolon*). Early Purple Orchid (*Orchis mascula*) and Twayblade Orchid (*Listera ovata*) have also been recorded.

A population of Southern Wood Ant (*Formica rufa*) is present in the wood.

Site Selection Rationale

The site is mapped as being ancient on the Essex Ancient Woodland Inventory and this is supported by documentary evidence and the presence of a range of ancient woodland indicator species, justifying the use of the HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites criterion.

The presence of a population of Wood Ants justifies the inclusion of the SC18 Invertebrates Listed as Species

of Principal Importance in England criterion.

Priority Habitats (Habitats of Principal Importance in England)
Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Ownership and Access

The site is owned and managed by Rochford District Council, with public access via a network of footpaths.

Condition Statement

Good, stable

Management Issues

The site is in active coppice management for conservation purposes.

Review Schedule

Site selected: 1993

Site Reviewed: October 2007, no change
July 2017, no change

Rochford Local Wildlife Site Description

Site reference: R11

Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TQ 834928

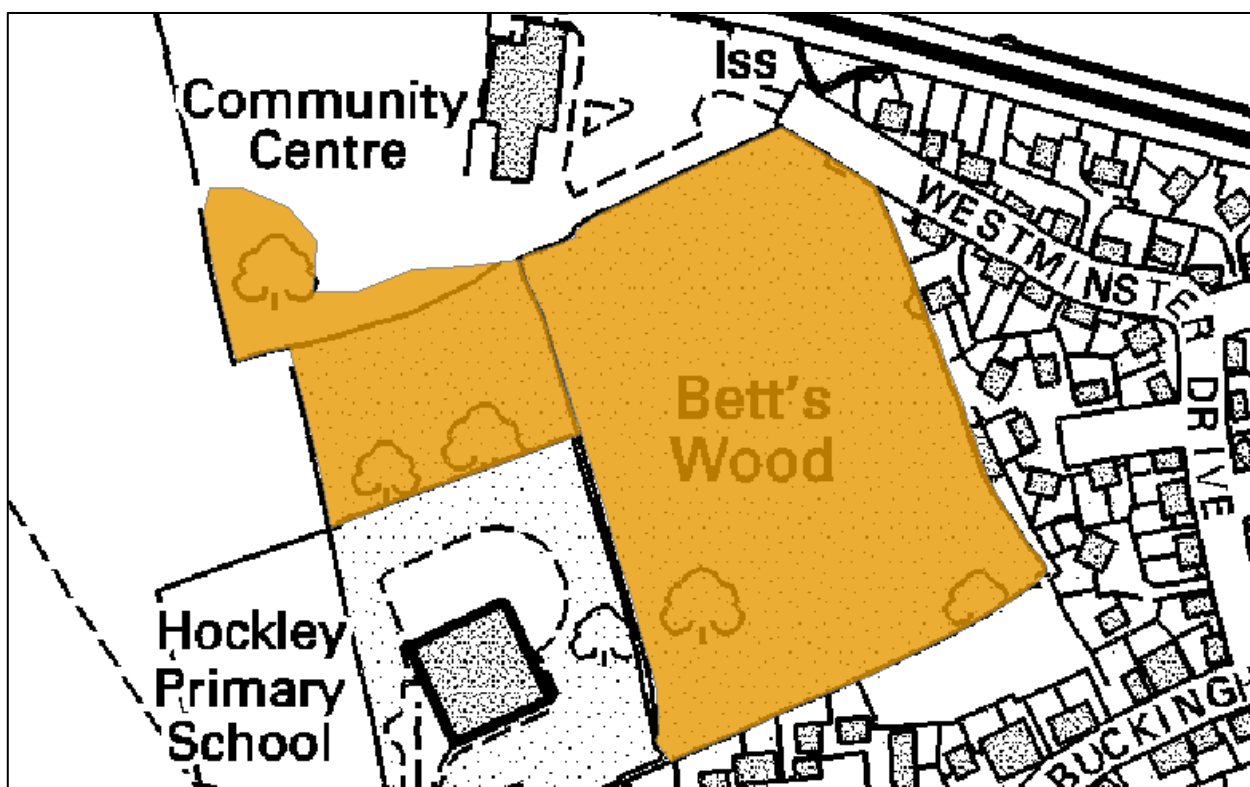
Site name: Bett's Wood, Hockley

Site area: 2.9 ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC1 Ancient Woodland
- HC2 Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient sites
- SC18 Invertebrates listed as Species of Principal Importance in England

Boundary Map



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Site Description

This site includes the ancient Bett's Wood with adjacent areas of secondary woodland.

The ancient part of the wood is primarily composed of old Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) coppice and standards with Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) and Sessile Oak (*Quercus petraea*) standards. The understorey consists of Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Elder (*Sambucus nigra*) and Midland Hawthorn (*Crataegus laevigata*) with some Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*) and recently coppiced Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*). Wild Service Trees (*Sorbus torminalis*) is also present.

A modest ground flora survives under the dense canopy, with Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.), Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Wood Melick (*Melica uniflora*), Creeping Soft-grass (*Holcus mollis*), Honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*) and Wood Millet (*Milium effusum*) being typical species.

The secondary woodland is made up of oak, Hornbeam and Ash with Holly, Hawthorn, Wild Service and Field Maple (*Acer campestre*). The ground flora includes Wood Melick and Bluebell spreading from the ancient section, with Male Fern (*Dryopteris filix-mas*) and locally abundant Common Ivy (*Hedera helix*)

A population of Southern Wood Ants (*Formica rufa*) is present.

Site Selection Rationale

From map and documentary evidence and the presence of a range of indicator species Bett's Woods can be

shown to be ancient, allowing the use of the HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites criterion. The secondary woodland areas have good structural diversity and are composed of locally native species, so are judged to meet the requirements of the Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland Priority Habitat justifying the use of the HC2 Lowland Mixed deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites criterion. They also serve as a buffer to the ancient woodland, supporting and increasing its value.

The presence of a population of Southern Wood Ants justifies the inclusion of the SC18 Invertebrates Listed as Species of Principal Importance in England criterion (Priority Species).

Habitats of Principal Importance in England (Priority Habitats)

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Ownership and Access

Bett's Wood is managed by Rochford District Council as a public open space, accessible from Westminster Drive, and is designated as a statutory Local Nature Reserve.

Condition Statement

Poor, declining

Management Issues

The south eastern corner was coppiced some years ago and now contains the invasive Butterfly Bush (*Buddleja davidii*). Another invasive non-native species, Cherry Laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*), is also present in significant quantity. This wood is well used by the public, and a proliferation of paths has had an impact on the quality of the habitat. The southern boundary is particularly affected by its proximity to the residential area.

Review Schedule

Site selected: 1993

Site Reviewed: October 2007, no change
July 2017, no change

Rochford Local Wildlife Site Description

Site reference: R12

Site name: The Dome Grasslands, Hullbridge

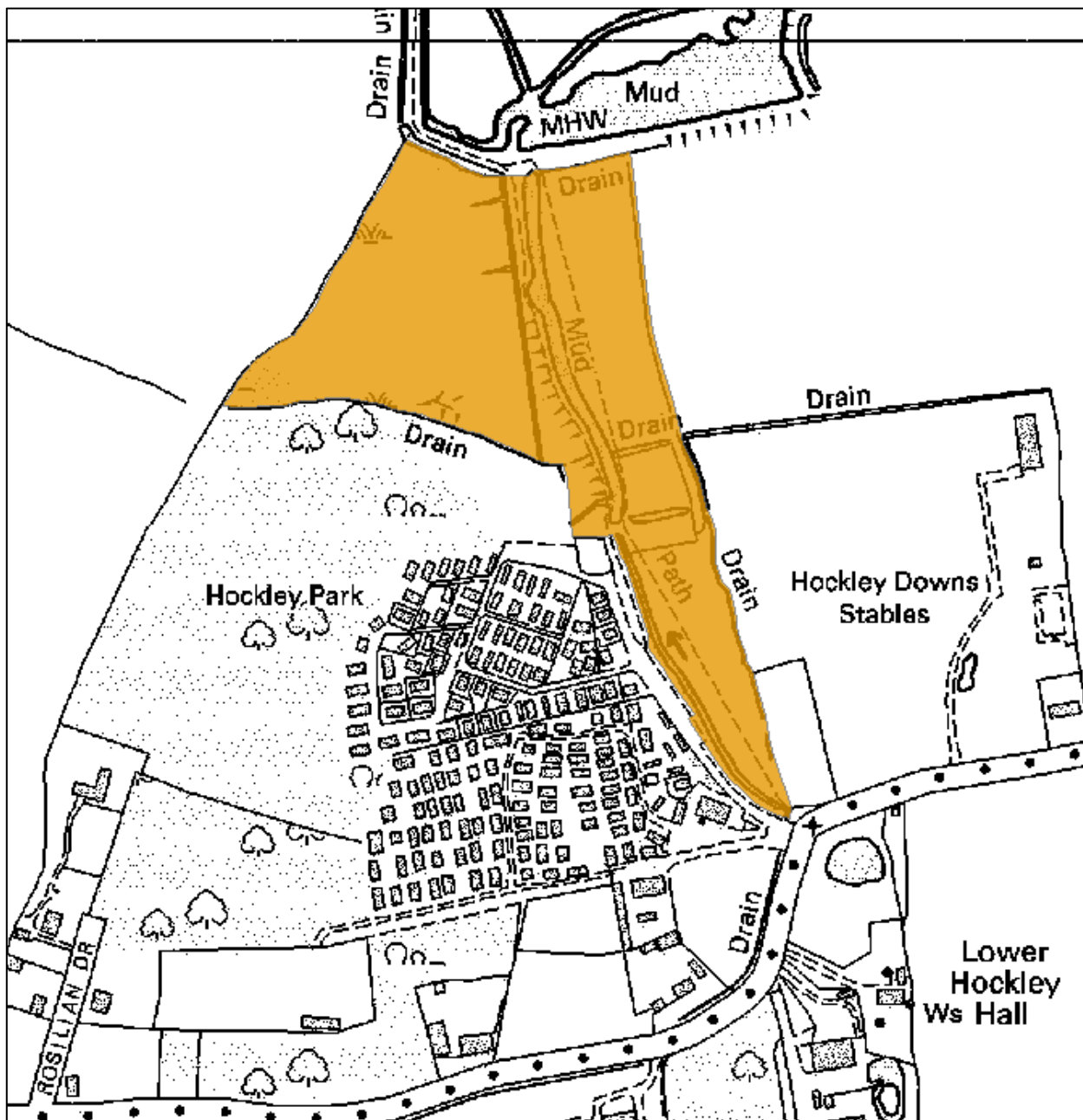
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TQ 835947

Site area: 5.3 ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC21 Coastal Grazing Marsh
- HC28 Small-component Mosaics

Boundary Map



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Site Description

The site consists of two blocks of unimproved grassland with a complicated history of management and flooding, lying adjacent to Brandy Hole Marshes, part of the Crouch and Roach Estuaries SSSI.

The site is bisected by a deep channel, muddy and tidal at its northern end where it supports fringes of Sea Aster (*Aster tripolium*), Sea Club-rush (*Bolboschoenus maritimus*) and Spear-leaved Orache (*Atriplex hastata*), transitioning to dominant Bulrush (*Typha latifolia*) further south.

To the west of the channel is a field used as a rifle range during the second world war, the trace of its butt still visible at the southern end. It is now dominated by tussocky Sea Couch (*Elytrigia atherica*) with scattered Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) scrub and only occasional Wild Carrot (*Daucus carota*), Tufted Vetch (*Vicia cracca*), Smooth Tare (*Vicia tetrasperma*) and Meadow Vetchling (*Lathyrus pratensis*). Narrow path edges support Common Bird's-foot-trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*) and Red Bartsia (*Odontites vernus*). A series of ditch channels support small stands of Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) with Sea Club-rush.

To the east of the channel is an area of rough coastal grassland derived from an area of saltmarsh isolated by a new section of seawall in the late 1960s (now forming the site's northern boundary) and an area of relict coastal grazing marsh. The grassland is dominated by Sea Couch and False Oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*), but there are some areas with a finer sward where species such as Meadow Foxtail (*Alopecurus pratensis*), Meadow Barley (*Hordeum secalinum*), Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*), Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*) and Timothy (*Phleum pratense*) occur with Red Bartsia, Common Bird's-foot-trefoil, Smooth Tare and Common Vetch (*Vicia sativa*). Low-lying channels, dry during the summer, are dominated by Creeping Bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*).

Site Selection Rationale

Parts of the site show structure and features typical of coastal grazing marsh and the map history of the site supports this origin, justifying the use of the HC21 Coastal Grazing Marsh criterion. Alongside this are areas of tidal creek, upper saltmarsh type coastal grassland, and reed stands that enhance this habitat, but are of insufficient extent or quality to justify their corresponding selection criteria. The HC28 Small-component Mosaics criterion is used to define the extent of the site to take in these habitats.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England (Priority Habitats)

None

Ownership and Access

Ownership is unknown, but a public footpath runs along the eastern side of the main channel and the site is well-used.

Condition Statement

Moderate, declining

Management Issues

The majority of the site does not appear to be receiving any management, leading to a loss of diversity and the dominance of coarse grass species. Noteworthy species recorded previously, such as Wild Celery (*Apium graveolens*), Slender Hare's-ear (*Bupleurum tenuissimum*), Hairy Buttercup (*Ranunculus sardous*), Strawberry Clover (*Trifolium fragiferum*) and Narrow-leaved Pepperwort (*Lepidium ruderale*) no longer appear to be present. The southernmost field had been hay-cut, removing all invertebrate habitat and herbaceous plants.

Review Schedule

Site selected: October 2007

Site Reviewed: July 2017, no change

Rochford Local Wildlife Site Description

Site reference: R13

Site name: Edwards Hall Park, Rayleigh

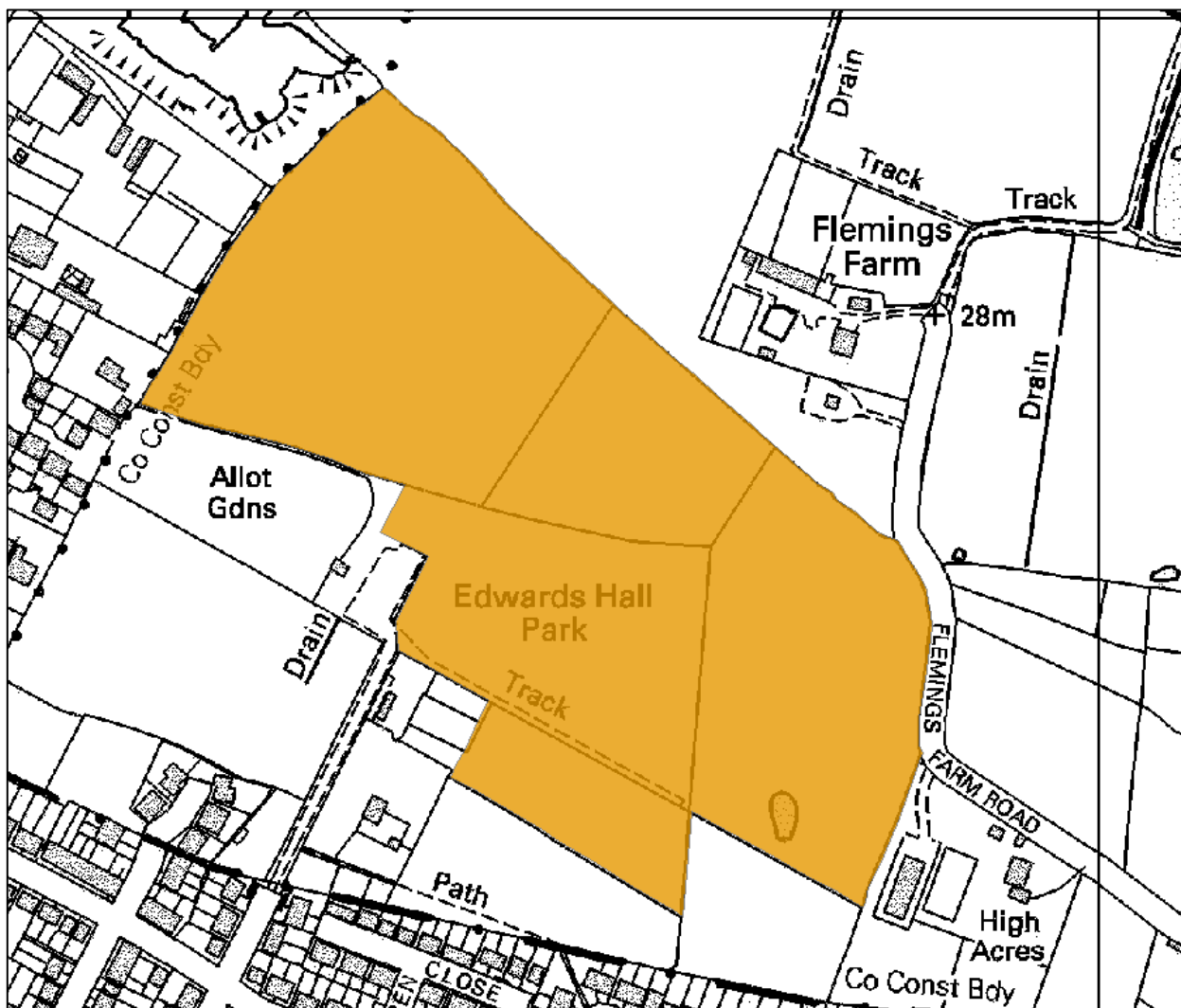
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TQ 837896

Site area: 11.6 ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC9 – Lowland Meadows

Boundary Map



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Site Description

This site comprises four fields forming the Edwards Hall Park public open space and a further section of one of these fields outside the park.

The site retains evidence of stetch patterning (a form of ridge and furrow) suggesting a lack of mechanised cultivation or agricultural improvement. A good range of grasses and herbs can be found, reflecting the varied drainage of the site due to both the ridge-and furrow and the general northerly slope. Grasses include Common Bent (*Agrostis capillaris*), Sweet Vernal Grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*), Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*), Meadow Barley (*Hordeum secalinum*) and Meadow Foxtail (*Alopecurus pratensis*). Herbaceous species include Sheep's Sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*), Lesser Stitchwort (*Stellaria graminea*) and Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), Red Clover (*Trifolium pratense*), Hoary Ragwort (*Senecio erucifolius*), Meadow Buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*) and Narrow-leaved Everlasting Pea (*Lathyrus sylvestris*).

Further habitat diversity is provided by the old, thick hedges that bound the fields.

Site Selection Rationale

The site supports a grassland community conforming to the National Vegetation Classification MG5 *Centaurea nigra* – *Cynosurus cristatus* hay meadow community, which qualifies it as Lowland Meadow Priority Habitat, allowing the use of the HC9 Lowland Meadow criterion.

Priority Habitats (Habitats of Principal Importance in England)

Lowland Meadows

Ownership and Access

The majority of the site is owned and managed by Rochford District Council with open access via a series of paths. The southeast field is in private ownership with no public access.

Condition Statement

Good

Management Issues

The continued good condition of the grassland is dependent on a favourable mowing regime, which may require spring and autumn cutting in order to control coarse grasses such as False Oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*), which is present at undesirably high frequency in places.

Review Schedule

Site selected: 1993

Site Reviewed: October 2007, no change
July 2017, no change

Rochford Local Wildlife Site Description

Site reference: R14

Site name: Marylands Wood, Hockley

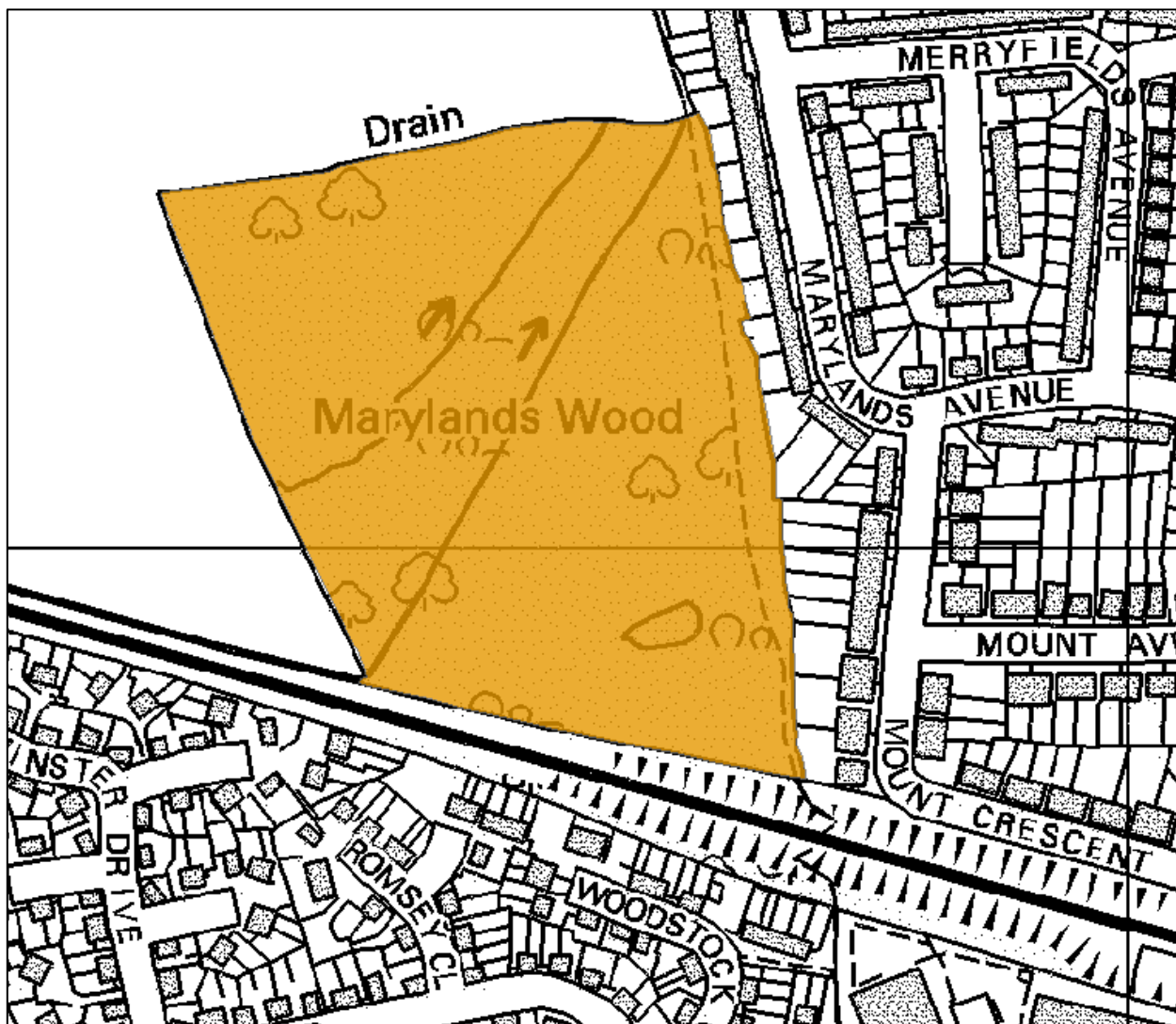
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TQ 838930

Site area: 5.4ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites
- HC2 Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites

Boundary Map



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Site Description

Marylands Wood is predominantly ancient, but with a small triangle of early 20th Century secondary woodland on the southern edge.

It comprises old Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) coppice throughout, with Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) standards and scattered Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*). The shrub layer includes Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) and Midland Hawthorn (*Crataegus laevigata*).

In the ground flora, Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) is found in abundance, though generally in localised patches throughout the wood. Other species present include Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), Wood Melick (*Melica uniflora*), Yellow Archangel (*Lamium galeobdolon*), Creeping Soft-grass (*Holcus mollis*) and Moschatel (*Adoxa moschatellina*). Early Purple Orchid (*Orchis mascula*) and Greater Butterfly Orchid (*Platanthera chlorantha*) have also been recorded.

The wood is crossed by a stream and contains a pond, which is fairly shaded.

Site Selection Rationale

From past documentary evidence Marylands Wood can be shown to be ancient, allowing the use of the HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites criterion. The more recent woodland has good structure and provides a valuable extension, allowing its inclusion with the use of the HC2 Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites criterion.

Priority Habitats (Habitats of Principal Importance in England)

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Ownership and Access

Ownership is unknown and it is likely to be private, but the site appears to be used by the general public. A public right of way follows along the eastern boundary, within the woodland.

Condition Statement

Moderate, stable

Management Issues

There is no evidence of recent management and the re-establishment of coppicing is necessary to maintain and improve its condition. There is widespread public access and some dumping of garden rubbish takes place.

Review Schedule

Site selected: 1993

Site Reviewed: October 2007, no change
July 2017, no change

Rochford Local Wildlife Site Description

Site reference: R15

Site name: Plumberow Wood, Hockley

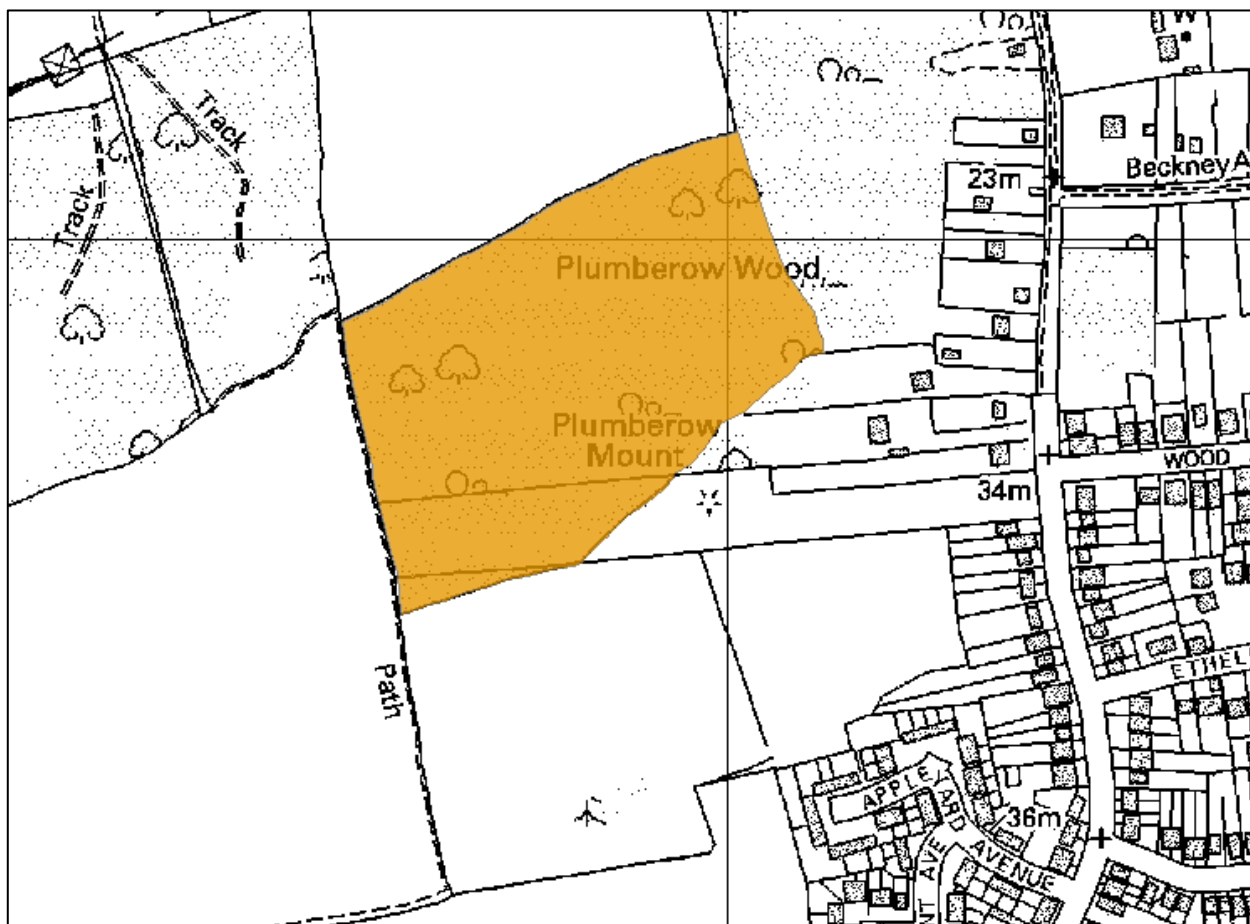
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TQ 839940

Site area: 5.4 ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

Boundary Map



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Site Description

Plumberow Wood is ancient and has a canopy composed of Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) and Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) with some Wild Service Tree (*Sorbus torminalis*). The understorey comprises much Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) with some Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Midland Hawthorn (*Crataegus laevigata*) and Spindle Tree (*Euonymus europaeus*)

The rich ground flora includes many ancient woodland indicators, such as Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Moschatel (*Adoxa moschatellina*), Yellow Archangel (*Lamium galeobdolon*), Early Purple Orchid (*Orchis mascula*) and Greater Butterfly Orchid (*Platanthera chlorantha*), an Essex Red List (scarce) species.

Site Selection Rationale

From documentary evidence and as indicated by its species composition, Plumberow Wood can be shown to be ancient, allowing the use of the HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites criterion.

Priority Habitats (Habitats of Principal Importance in England)

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Ownership and Access

Ownership is unknown, but the site is believed to be private. The site can be viewed from the public footpath

which follows the western boundary of the site.

Condition Statement

Good, stable

Management Issues

There is no evidence of conservation management within the wood, which will result in a decline in condition in the long term.

Review Schedule

Site selected: 1993

Site Reviewed: October 2007, no change
July 2017, no change

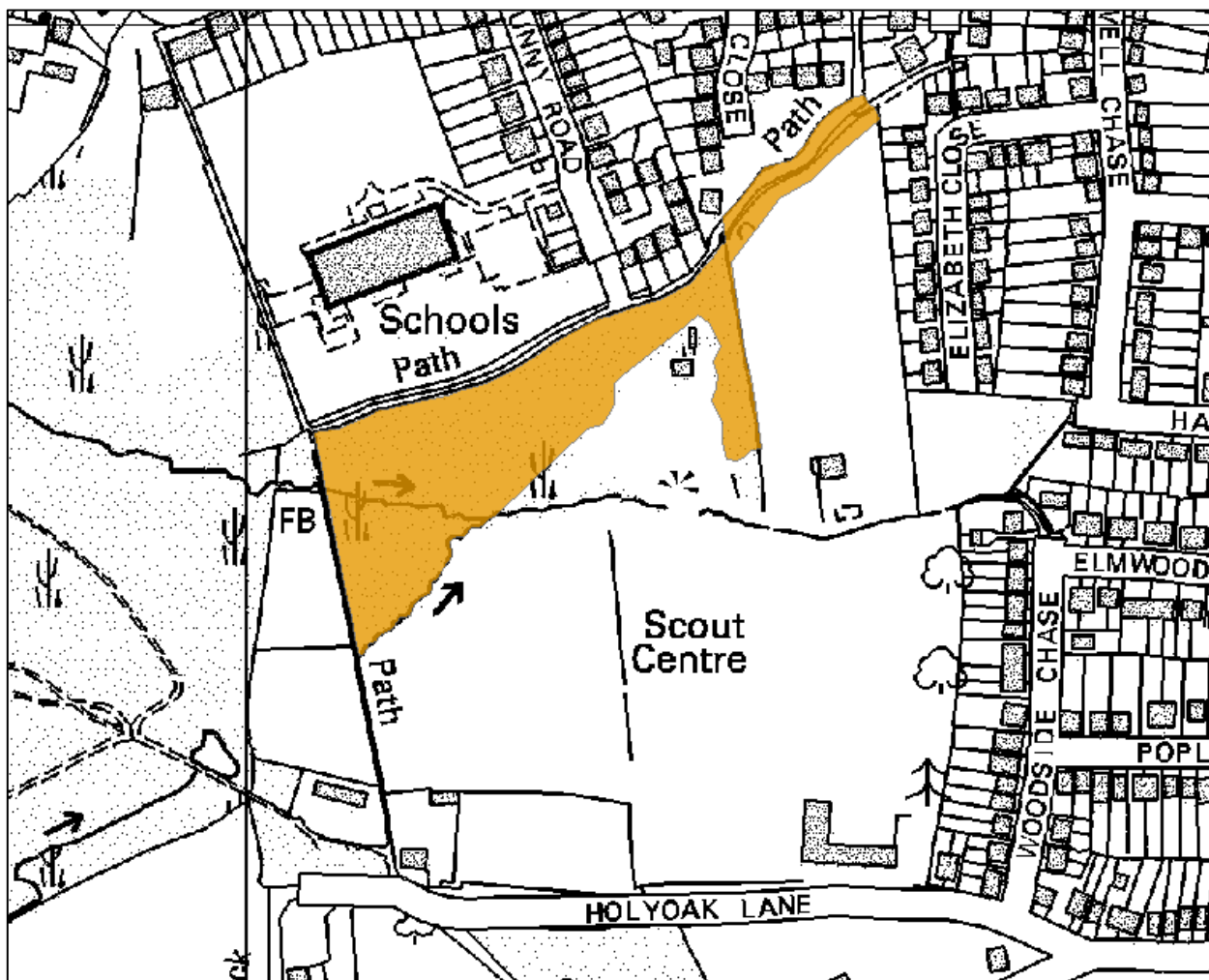
Rochford Local Wildlife Site Description

Site reference: R16	Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TQ 841918
Site name: Belchamps Camp, Hockley Woods	Site area: 1.7 ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC1- Ancient Woodland Sites

Boundary Map



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Site Description

This remnant of ancient woodland is situated on the eastern fringes of the Hockley Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest.

The canopy is dominated by Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) coppice with standards of Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*). Wild Service (*Sorbus torminalis*) can be found in the northeast corner.

The ground flora is patchy, the site's heavy use resulting in some areas being denuded of vegetation, with consequent erosion of litter layers and compaction of the soil. Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*) and Wood Melick (*Melica uniflora*) are present, but in small quantities.

The site includes wooded habitat derived from an old hedgerow extending northeast from the main site along the ditch, where there is a mature Wild Service, Pedunculate Oak, Field Maple, Wood Melick, Wood Sage (*Teucrium scorodonia*) and Greater Stitchwort (*Stellaria holostea*).

Site Selection Rationale

From map and documentary evidence Belchamp's Camp woodland can be shown to be ancient, allowing the use of the HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites criterion.

Priority Habitats (Habitats of Principal Importance in England)

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Ownership and Access

The site is owned by four local districts of the Scouting Association and operated as a residential activity centre. There are public footpaths along the northern and western boundaries of the site.

Condition Statement

Poor, stable.

Management Issues

Small sections where coppicing has taken place have been fenced off allowing some recovery of the ground flora. However damage to and loss of woodland soils will limit what recovery is possible.

Review Schedule

Site selected: 1993

Site Reviewed: October 2007

July 2017, wooded strip in northeast corner added.

Rochford Local Wildlife Site Description

Site reference: R17

Site name: Gustedhall Wood, Rochford

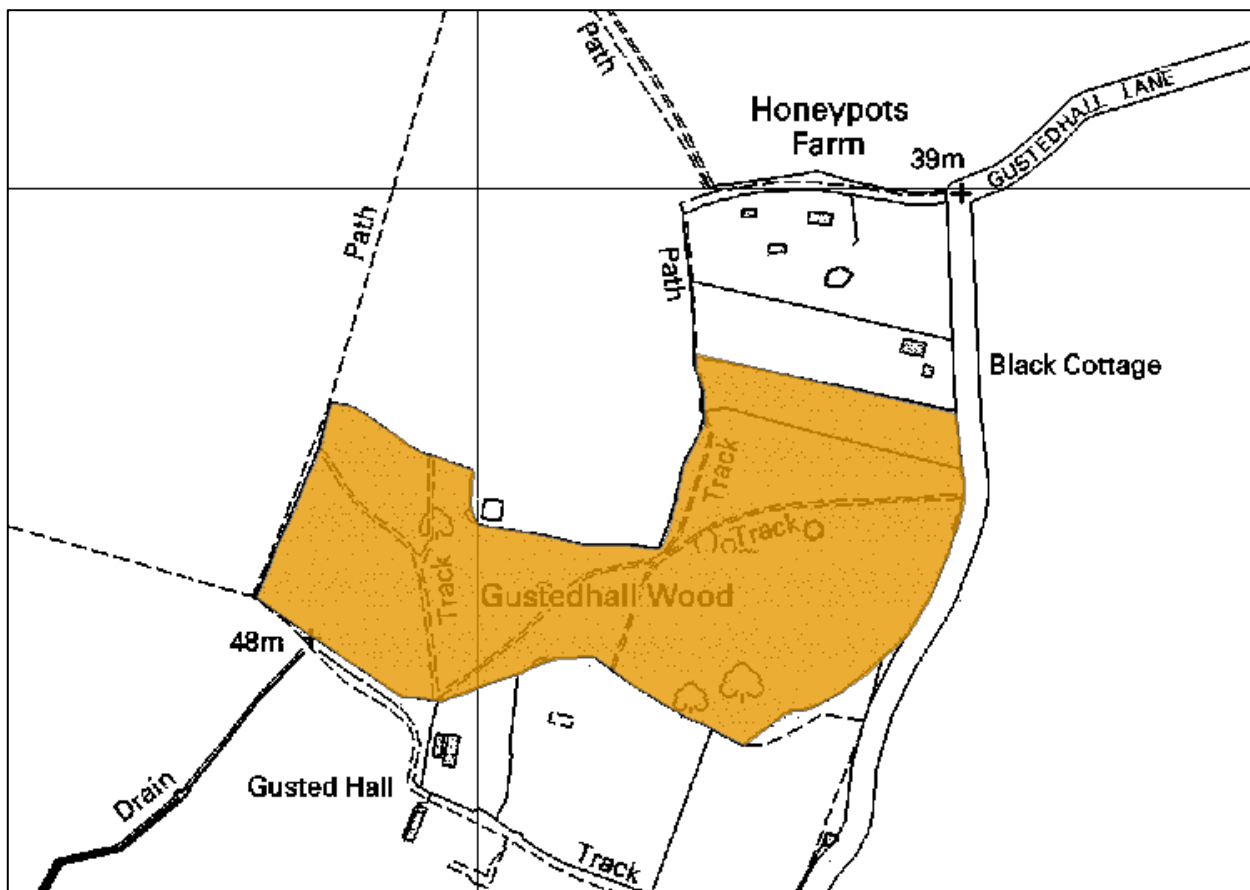
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TQ 841907

Site area: 6.2 ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

Boundary Map



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Site Description

This ancient wood has standards of Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) with Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) and Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) coppice in varying proportions and some Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*). The understorey is sparse, but includes Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*) and Elder (*Sambucus nigra*), with Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) around the edges.

The ground flora is poor at the eastern end adjacent to Gustedhall Lane, but elsewhere Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) is prominent, with Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), Yellow Archangel (*Lamium galeobdolon*), Wood Melick (*Melica uniflora*), Creeping Soft-grass (*Holcus mollis*), Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*), Wood Millet (*Milium effusum*), Stinking Iris (*Iris foetidissima*), Three-nerved Sandwort (*Moehringia trinervia*) and Wavy Hair-grass (*Deschampsia flexuosa*). Greater Stitchwort (*Stellaria holostea*), Red Campion (*Silene dioica*), False-brome (*Brachypodium sylvaticum*), Honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*), Ground Ivy (*Glechoma hederacea*) and Broad Buckler-fern (*Dryopteris dilatata*) are also present with Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) around the margins.

To the north, adjacent to Gustedhall Lane is a strip of secondary woodland of Pedunculate Oak and Hornbeam, which contains a large, seasonal pond.

The site supports a population of Southern Wood Ants (*Formica rufa*), a Priority Species.

Site Selection Rationale

The majority of the site is documented as ancient woodland, allowing the use of the HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites criterion, with the secondary strip to the north possessing a structure and composition that allows the use of the HC2 Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites criterion.

The presence of a population of Southern Wood Ants justifies the inclusion of the SC18 Invertebrates Listed as Species of Principal Importance in England criterion (Priority Species).

Priority Habitats (Habitats of Principal Importance in England)

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Ownership and Access

Ownership is unknown, but the site is believed to be private. The site can be viewed from Gustedhall Lane and from a footpath that runs along the southern boundary at its western end.

Condition Statement

Good, stable

Management Issues

There is no evidence of active management, which will eventually lead to a decline in the site's condition. Some of the Sweet Chestnut stools appear to have health issues, with poor foliage and evidence of dieback.

Review Schedule

Site selected: 1993

Site Reviewed: October 2007, no change

July 2017, secondary woodland strip added

Rochford Local Wildlife Site Description

Site reference: R18

Site name: The Scrubs, Rayleigh

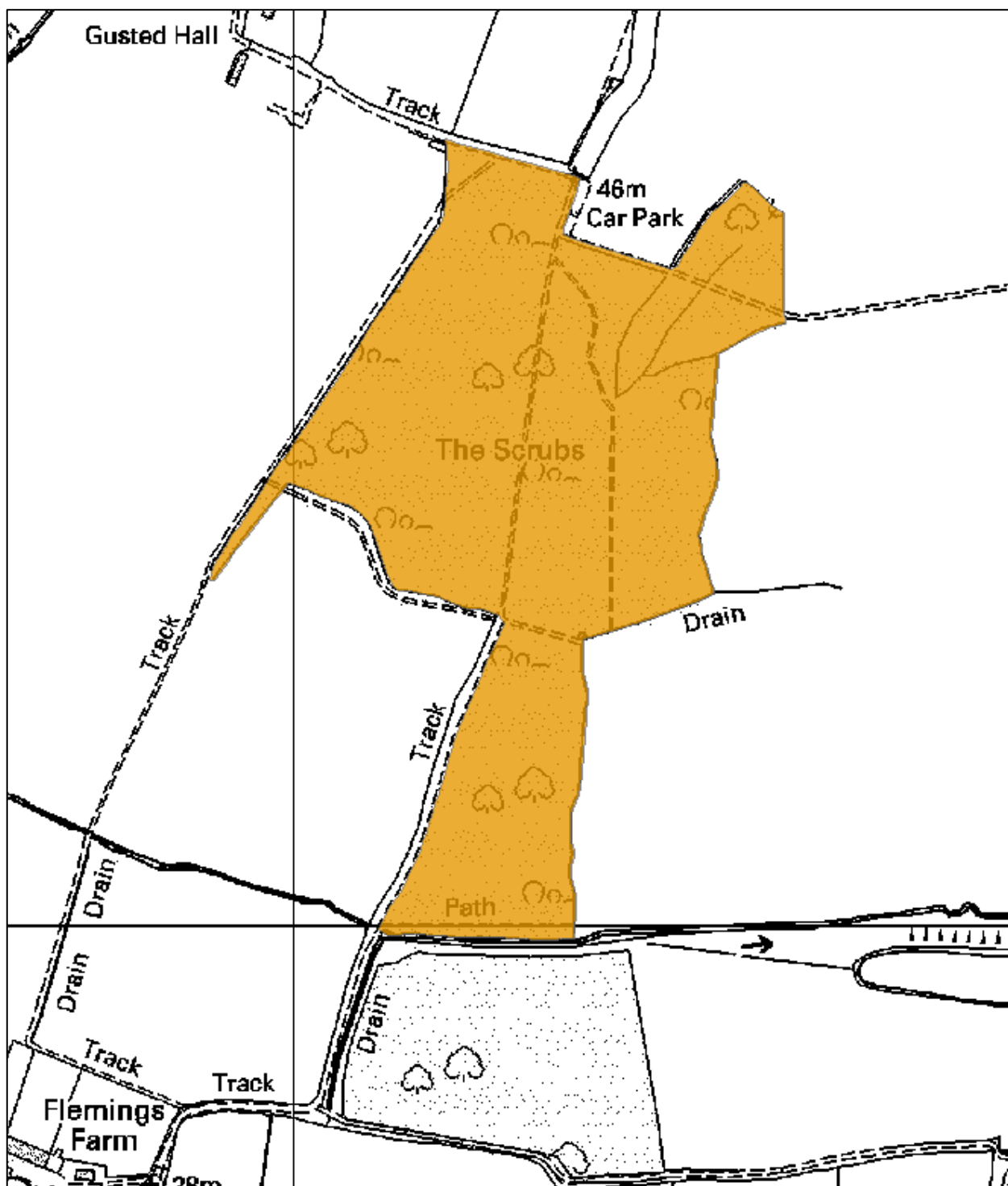
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TQ 842903

Site area: 9.6 ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites
- SC18 Invertebrates Listed as Species of Principal Importance in England

Boundary Map



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Site Description

The Scrubs is an ancient woodland site within a complex of LoWS in the valley of the River Roach between

Rayleigh and Rochford.

It contains dense Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) and Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) coppice under Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) standards. Birch (*Betula* spp.) is also found within the sub-canopy, in the centre of the site whilst the understorey includes Midland Hawthorn (*Crataegus laevigata*), Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*) and Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.).

The ground flora is well-established in the north, where Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) and Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*) form scattered and extensive patches of rich ground flora, with lesser amounts of Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*) and Wood Melick (*Melica uniflora*).

The site supports a population of Southern Wood Ants (*Formica rufa*), a Priority Species.

Site Selection Rationale

The site is well documented as being ancient and this is supported by the presence of a range of ancient woodland indicator species, justifying the use of the HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites criterion. The presence of a population of Southern Wood Ants justifies the inclusion of the SC18 Invertebrates Listed as Species of Principal Importance in England criterion.

Priority Habitats (Habitats of Principal Importance in England)

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Ownership and Access

Ownership of the site is unknown, but it is believed to be private. However, there is a car park at the northern end of the site and a by-way runs through the northern section and along the western boundary of the southern section.

Condition Statement

Moderate, stable

Management Issues

There is no evidence of recent conservation management. Public use has caused damage to the site's ground flora, both in the north around the car park and along the main north-south path. The dense canopy is preventing establishment of understorey and ground layer, particularly in the south. The potentially invasive non-native species False Acacia (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) is present.

Review Schedule

Site selected: 1993

Site Reviewed: October 2007, no change
July 2017, no change

Rochford Local Wildlife Site Description

Site reference: R19

Site name: Primrose Wood, Rochford

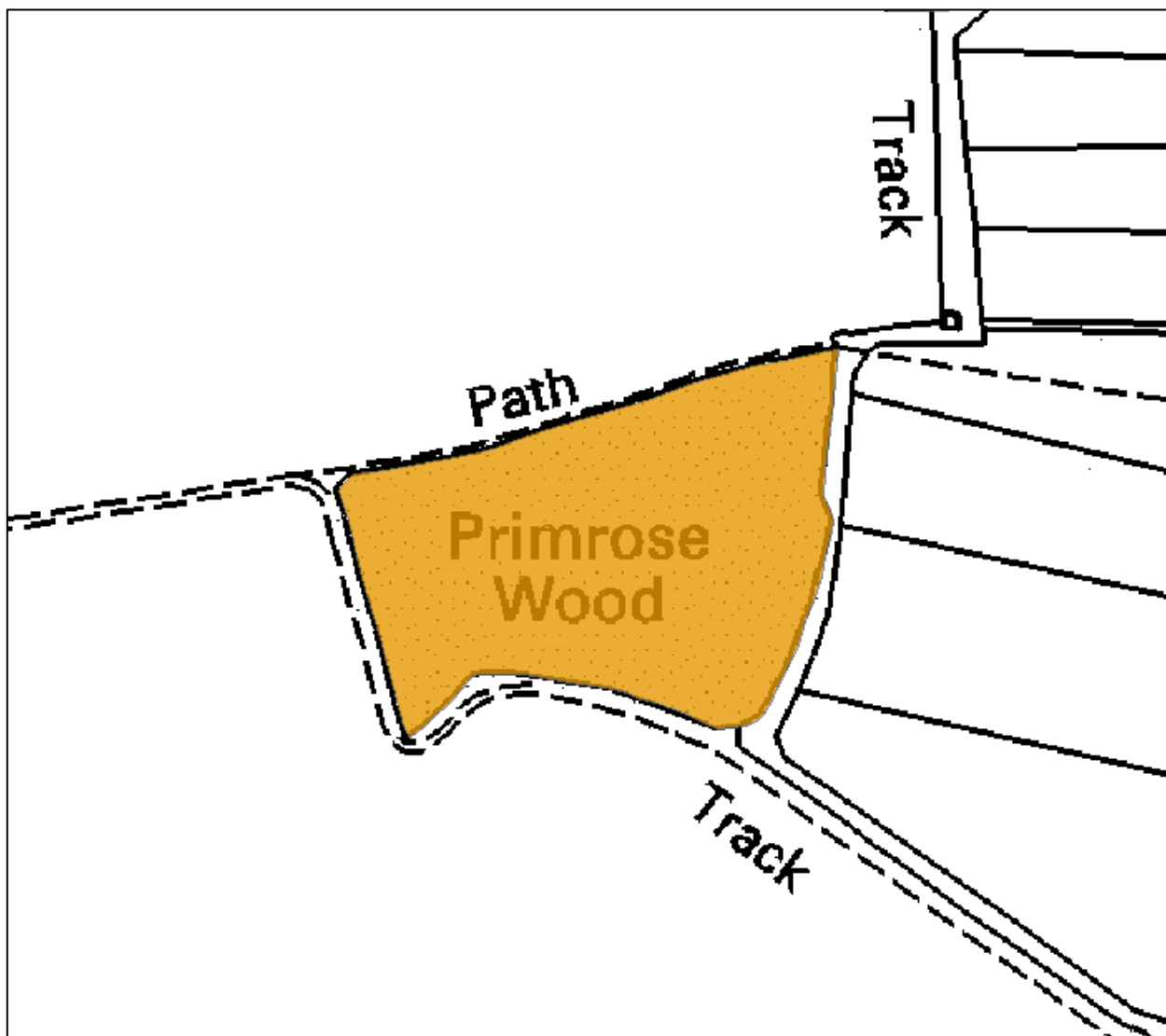
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TQ 846904

Site area: 1.3 ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC2 – Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites

Boundary Map



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Site Description

This small woodland is old, but not ancient. It comprises Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) and Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) standards with Sweet Chestnut and Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) coppice. The understorey is made up of Wych Elm (*Ulmus glabra*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) and Elder (*Sambucus nigra*). Some Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) is present and the northwest quadrant of the wood is dominated by False Acacia (*Robinia pseudoacacia*), with a significant number of standing dead individuals.

The ground flora is dominated by Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) and Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) with Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), Wood Millet (*Milium effusum*), Wood Meadow-grass (*Poa nemoralis*), Three-nerved Sandwort (*Moehringia trinervia*), Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*), Red Campion (*Silene dioica*), Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) and Greater Stitchwort (*Stellaria holostea*).

Site Selection Rationale

6.50

There is no evidence to suggest this wood is ancient, but it is predominantly composed of native species and has good structure. It is therefore taken to meet the Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland Priority Habitat description allowing the use of the HC2 Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites criterion.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England (Priority Habitats)

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Ownership and Access

The site is believed to be in private ownership and there is no public access. It can be viewed from a public footpath along the northern boundary.

Condition Statement

Moderate, stable

Management Issues

False Acacia is dominant in the canopy of a significant part of the wood at the expense of native species, but does generate a large quantity of dead wood, which may be beneficial for invertebrates. There is no evidence of any management for conservation, although some management appears to take place for recreational purposes.

Review Schedule

Site selected: 1993

Site Reviewed: October 2007

July 2017, no change

Rochford Local Wildlife Site Description

Site reference: R20

Site name: Cottons, Rochford

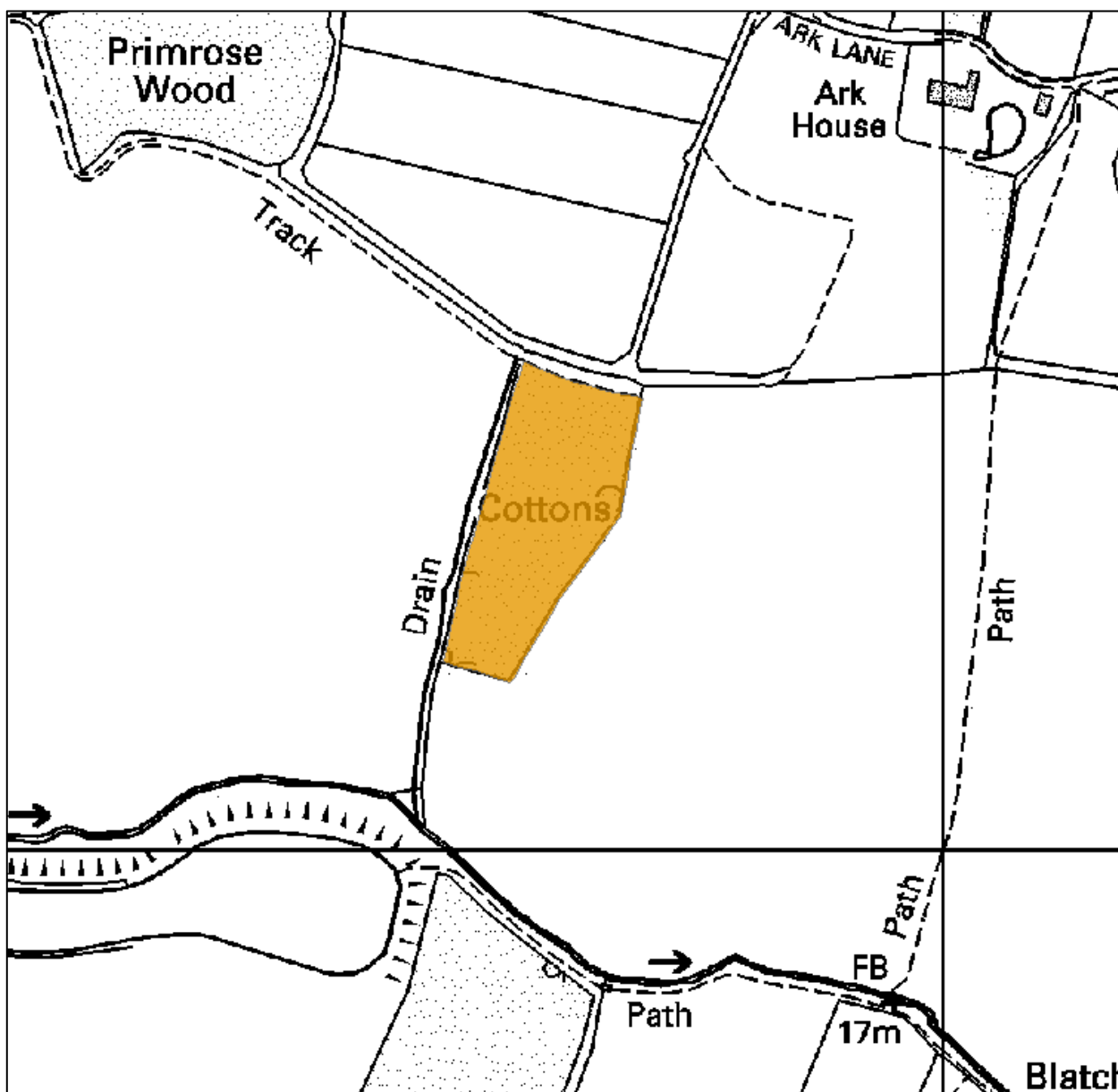
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TQ 848902

Site area: 1 ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

Boundary Map



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Site Description

The canopy of this small ancient wood largely comprises Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) standards and Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) coppice with some Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) coppice and Wild Service (*Sorbus torminalis*). The understorey includes Field Maple (*Acer campestre*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Midland Hawthorn (*Crataegus laevigata*), Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) and Elder (*Sambucus nigra*).

The ground layer is reasonably diverse, with Goldilocks Buttercup (*Ranunculus auricomus*), Butcher's Broom (*Ruscus aculeatus*), Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*), Yellow Archangel (*Lamium galeobdolon*), Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Moschatel (*Adoxa moschatellina*), Wood Melick (*Melica uniflora*), Wood Millet (*Milium effusum*), Wood Sedge (*Carex sylvatica*), Wood Meadow-

grass (*Poa nemoralis*) and Early Dog-violet (*Viola reichenbachiana*).

Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.), Herb Robert (*Geranium robertianum*), False-brome (*Brachypodium sylvaticum*), Ground Ivy (*Glechoma hederacea*), Cow Parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*), Greater Stitchwort (*Stellaria holostea*) and Honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*) are also present. Greater Butterfly Orchid (*Platanthera chlorantha*), an Essex Red List species has been recorded.

Site Selection Rationale

Documentary evidence and the presence of a number of indicator species show that this wood is of ancient origin, allowing the use of the HC2 Ancient Woodland Sites criterion.

Priority Habitats (Habitats of Principal Importance in England)

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Ownership and Access

Ownership of the site is unknown, but it is believed to be private with no public access.

Condition Statement

Good, stable

Management Issues

There is no evidence of recent conservation management, which will eventually result in a decline of condition.

Review Schedule

Site selected: 1993

Site Reviewed: October 2007, no change
July 2017, no change

Rochford Local Wildlife Site Description

Site reference: R21

Site name: Beckney Wood, Ashingdon/Hockley

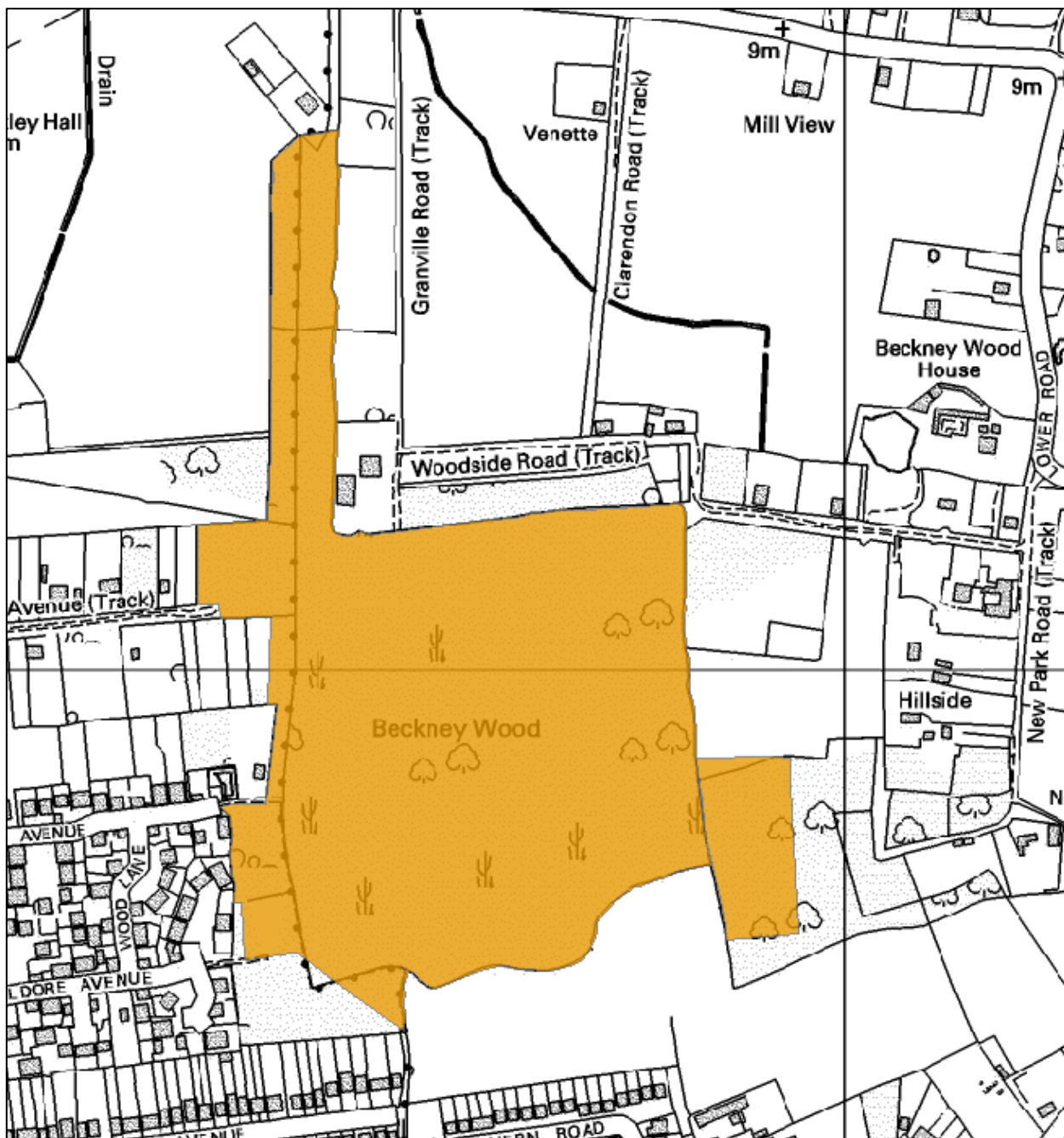
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TQ 848940

Site area: 15.7 ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC1 - Ancient Woodland
- HC2 - Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites

Boundary Map



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Site Description

This majority of this wood on the northern scarp of the Rochford plain is ancient, although it is surrounded by secondary woodland derived from plotland, some of which is also included.

The canopy of the ancient section is dominated by Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) with old Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) coppice and some Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) coppice, especially on the boundaries. There

is little understorey within the centre of the wood, but closer to the edges is Wild Service-tree (*Sorbus torminalis*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Midland Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) and Hazel (*Corylus avellana*).

The ground flora is also more prominent closer to the edges and includes Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), Yellow Archangel (*Lamium galeobdolon*), Wood Melick (*Melica uniflora*), Wood Millet (*Milium effusum*) and Honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*). Hart's-tongue (*Asplenium scolopendrium*) and Broad Buckler-fern (*Dryopteris dilatata*) are also present.

At the northern end, the narrow extension is also made up of Pedunculate Oak and Hornbeam, but this changes to open Pedunculate Oak woodland with little understorey half way along.

The western secondary areas have a canopy dominated by Pedunculate Oak, with some Ash and a diverse understorey of Hawthorn, Holly, Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), Midland Hawthorn, Field Maple (*Acer campestre*), Buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*), Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*), Hornbeam, elm (*Ulmus* sp.), Wild Service-tree and Wild Privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*).

The ground flora is also reasonably diverse, including species that have spread from the ancient section, such as Bluebell, Wood Millet, Yellow Archangel and Wood Melick, together with Sanicle (*Sanicula europaea*), Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*), Enchanter's-nightshade (*Circaea lutetiana*), Hairy St John's-wort (*Hypericum hirsutum*), False-brome (*Brachypodium sylvaticum*), Wood Avens (*Geum urbanum*), Herb Robert (*Geranium robertianum*), Greater Stitchwort (*Stellaria holostea*), Red Campion (*Silene dioica*), Male Fern (*Dryopteris filix-mas*) and Honeysuckle, amongst Bramble and Common Ivy (*Hedera helix*).

The secondary woodland to the southeast consists of Ash and Hornbeam with an understorey of Field Maple and Hawthorn. The ground flora is dominated by Cow Parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*), but with Bluebell, Wood Millet, Yellow Archangel, False-brome, Greater Stitchwort, Bramble and Common Ivy.

Site Selection Rationale

From map and documentary evidence and the presence of a range of indicator species the majority of Beckney Wood can be shown to be ancient, allowing the use of the HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites criterion. The secondary woodland areas are semi-natural, being composed of locally native species, and have attained a typical woodland structure. They are judged to meet the requirements of the Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland Habitat of Principal Importance in England justifying the use of the HC2 Lowland Mixed deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites criterion. They also serve as a buffer to the ancient woodland, supporting and increasing its value.

Priority Habitats (Habitats of Principal Importance in England)

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Ownership and Access

Parts of the site are owned by Rochford District Council and it is crossed by several public rights of way, but some parts are privately owned and fenced off.

Condition Statement

Good, Stable

Management Issues

There is no evidence of any recent conservation management, which will eventually result in a decline in condition. Some garden escapes, including the undesirable Cherry Laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*), were noted.

Review Schedule

Site selected: 1993

Site Reviewed: October 2007, no change
July 2017, minor boundary changes

Rochford Local Wildlife Site Description

Site reference: R22

Site name: Potash Wood, Rochford

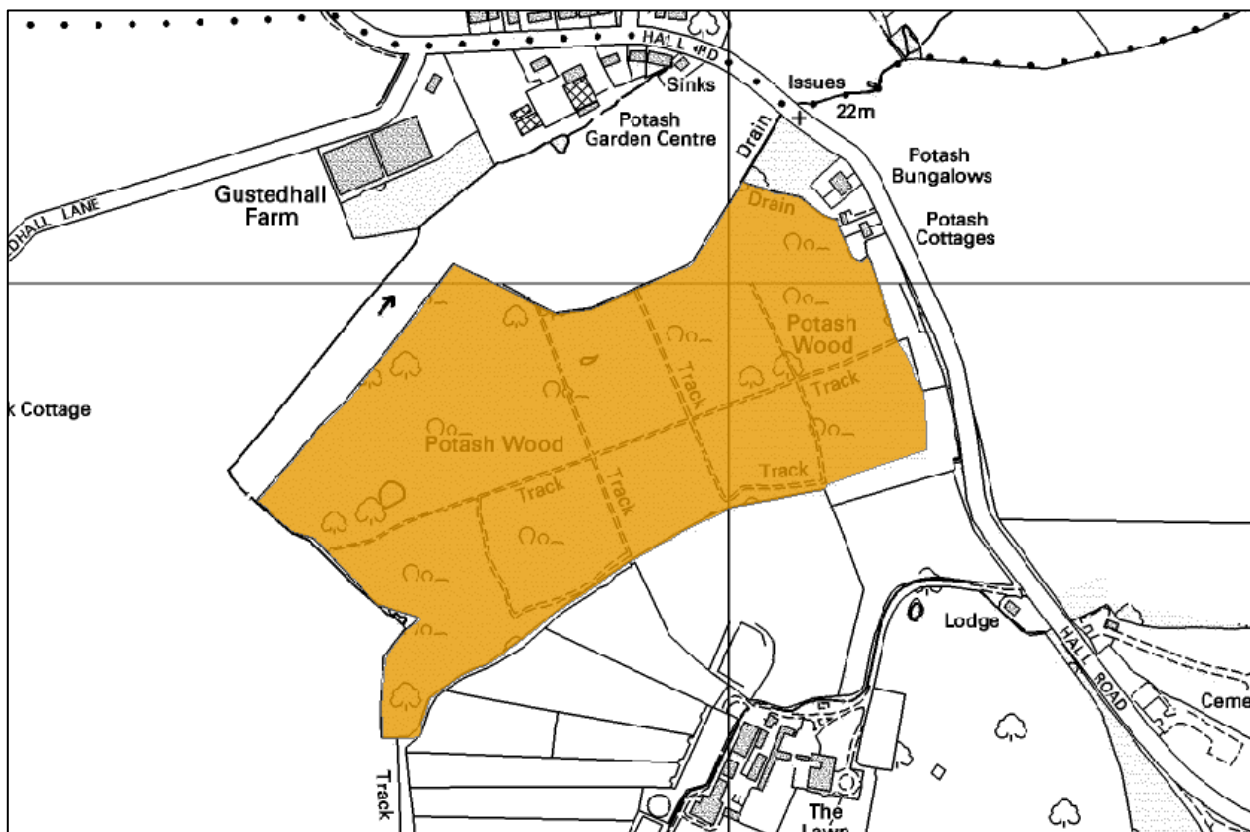
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TQ 849909

Site area: 13.8 ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites

Boundary Map



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Site Description

This wood, which is likely to be ancient, is heavily used for recreational activities, which have affected the natural vegetation.

The canopy is made up of Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) standards, coppiced Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) and some coppice stools of Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*). The understorey is generally sparse, but includes Aspen (*Populus tremula*) and Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*).

The ground flora is patchy and Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) is the most prominent species, but Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Butchers Broom (*Ruscus aculeatus*) and Honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*) are also present.

Site Selection Rationale

Although it is not conclusive, available documentary evidence suggests that the wood is likely to be ancient, and so the HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites criterion has been applied.

Priority Habitats (Habitats of Principal Importance in England)

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Ownership and Access

The site is in private ownership with no public access. The site can be viewed from Hall Road (B1013) to the east.

Condition Statement

Poor, stable

Management Issues

The woodland has been used for various private recreational activities including paintballing, horse riding and cycling. This, combined with a lack of traditional management in recent years, has had a significant effect on the woodland ground flora.

Review Schedule

Site selected: 1993

Site Reviewed: October 2007, no change
July 2017, no change

Rochford Local Wildlife Site Description

Site reference: R23

Site name: Trinity Wood, Ashingdon

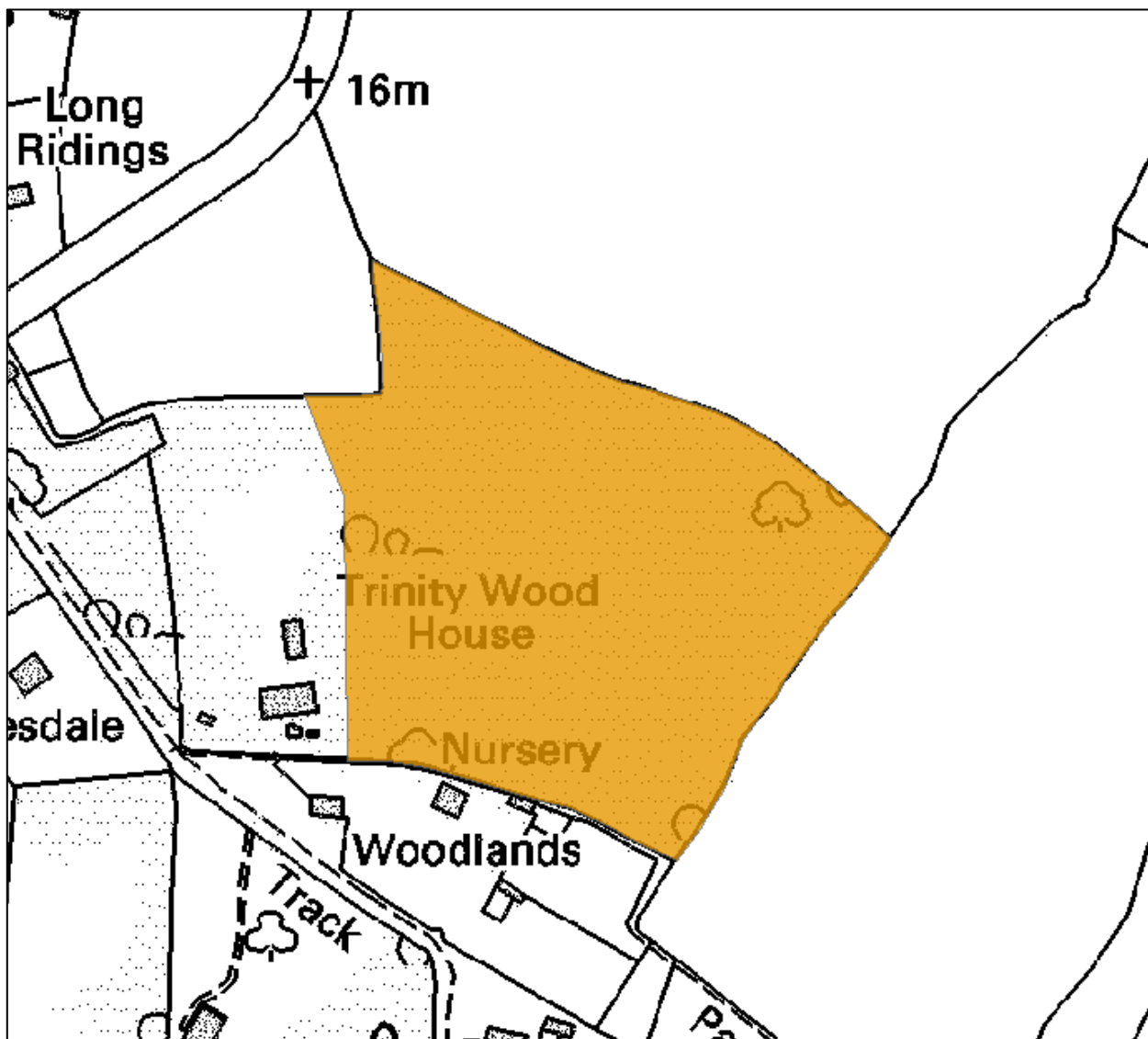
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TQ 856937

Site area: 3.2 ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC1 Ancient woodland

Boundary Map



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Site Description

Trinity Wood is a remnant of ancient woodland on a north facing slope

The canopy is made up of coppiced Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) and coppiced Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) with a few Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) and Ash standards. Hornbeam is dominant over much of the wood, while Ash is more abundant in the northwest corner. The understorey includes Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), Midland Hawthorn (*Crataegus laevigata*), Elder (*Sambucus nigra*) and some large Field Maple (*Acer campestre*). Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*) and Buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*) are present on the boundaries.

Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) is abundant within the ground flora with Wood Melick (*Melica uniflora*), Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), Wood Millet (*Milium effusum*) and Dog's-mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*) amongst frequent Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) and Ivy (*Hedera helix*). Common Cow-wheat

(*Melampyrum pratense*) has been recorded.

Site Selection Rationale

Given the presence of a range of indicator species, especially Wood Anemone, it is very likely that this site is ancient and there is no map evidence to suggest otherwise and so the HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites criterion has been applied.

Priority Habitats (Habitats of Principal Importance in England)

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Ownership and Access

Ownership is unknown, but the site is believed to be private. The site can be viewed from the public footpath which follows the southern boundary of the site.

Condition Statement

Good, stable

Management Issues

There is no evidence of any conservation management within the wood in recent years and some coppice stools have started to collapse. A small amount of the non-native Rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*) is present.

Review Schedule

Site selected: 1993

Site Reviewed: October 2007, no change
July 2017, no change

Rochford Local Wildlife Site Description

Site reference: R24

Site name: Magnolia Nature Reserve and Fields,
Ashingdon/Hawkwell

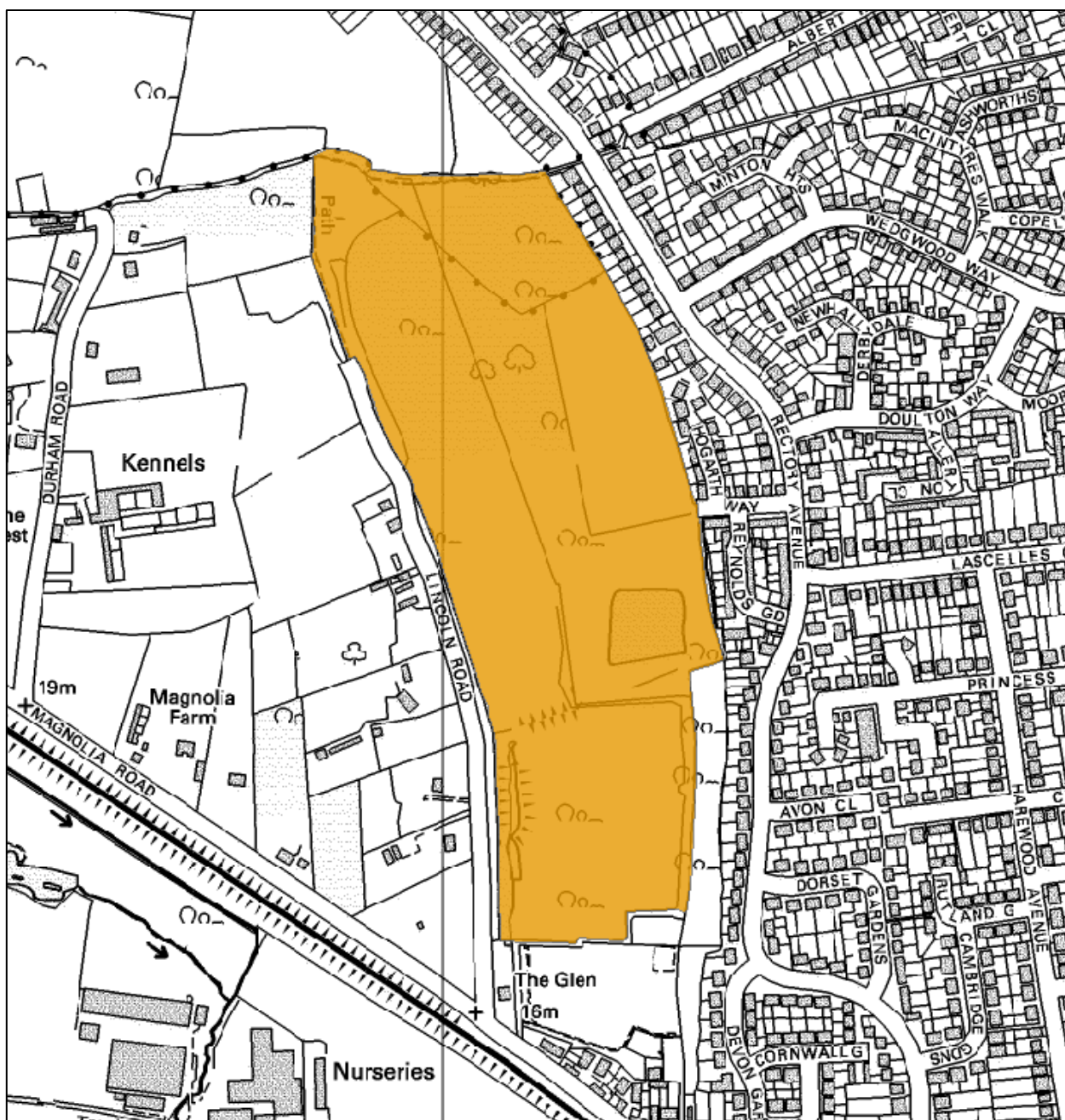
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TQ861925

Site area: 14.8 ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC2 – Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites
- HC9 – Lowland Meadows
- HC28 – Small-component Mosaics
- SC1 – Vascular Plants
- SC15 – Great Crested Newts

Boundary Map



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Site Description

This site consists of a mosaic of grazed pastures, rough unmanaged grassland, scrub and maturing woodland, together with a flood alleviation lagoon.

The better grassland habitat consists of two fields in the centre of the site, the margins of the flood alleviation lagoon and a large, horse-grazed pasture in the northeast. The sward generally consists of Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*), Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*), Common Bent (*Agrostis capillaris*), Meadow Foxtail (*Alopecurus pratensis*), meadow-grasses (*Poa* spp.) and Yorkshire-fog (*Holcus lanatus*) with Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), Meadow vetchling (*Lathyrus pratensis*), Grass Vetchling (*Lathyrus nissolia*), Agrimony (*Agrimonia eupatoria*), Common Bird's-foot-trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), Wild Carrot (*Daucus carota*), Fairy Flax (*Linum catharticum*) and Hairy St John's-wort (*Hypericum hirsutum*). More significant species include the Essex Red List Pale Flax (*Linum bienne*) and Carnation Sedge (*Carex panicea*).

In the northern part of the site is an area of young woodland, made up of Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) with Common Ivy (*Hedera helix*), False-brome (*Brachypodium sylvaticum*), Herb Robert (*Geranium robertianum*), Remote Sedge (*Carex remota*), Wood Avens (*Geum urbanum*) and Spurge laurel (*Daphne laureola*). To the west is dense scrub dominated by Hawthorn.

More open, developing woodland at the southern end of the site is more diverse with oak, Ash, Hawthorn, Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), Apple (*Malus domestica*), Crack Willow (*Salix fragilis*) and Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*). Less frequent are Bullace (*Prunus domestica*), Buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*), Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*) and Wayfaring-tree (*Viburnum lantana*). This is interspersed with Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) scrub and beds of common Nettle (*Urtica dioica*) with Hemlock (*Conium maculatum*).

The flood alleviation lagoon is dominated by Bulrush (*Typha latifolia*) with Sea club-rush (*Bolboschoenus maritima*), Great Willowherb (*Epilobium hirsutum*), Bittersweet (*Solanum dulcamara*) and some willow (*Salix* sp.) saplings.

There are several ponds, the most significant being a long linear pond on the western edge at the southern end of the site, the marginal vegetation of which includes Water-plantain (*Alisma plantago-aquatica*), Water Mint (*Mentha aquatica*), Narrow-leaved Bulrush (*Typha angustifolia*), Yellow Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*) and False Fox-sedge (*Carex otrubae*).

A large population of Great Crested Newts is present on the site, considered to be the largest in Essex, along with Smooth Newt, Common Frog, Common Lizard and Grass Snake.

Site Selection Rationale

The more mature woodland areas have a structure and composition that matches the appropriate Priority Habitat description to allow the HC2 Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites criterion. Some of the better grassland can be recognised as the MG5 hay meadow community, allowing the use of the HC9 Lowland Meadows criterion. Other habitats less clearly meet any individual criterion, but contribute to the overall diversity of the site and so the HC28 Small-component Mosaics criterion is used to define the extent of the designated site.

The SC1 Vascular Plants criterion is used because of the population of Carnation Sedge, one of only a few left in Essex. The significance of the Great Crested Newt population is such that the SC15 Great Crested Newts criterion can be applied.

Priority Habitats (Habitats of Principal Importance in England)

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland
Lowland Meadows

Ownership and Access

Much of the site is managed by Hawkwell Parish Council as a nature reserve with open public access, although the flood alleviation lagoon is owned and operated by Anglian Water Services. A bridleway runs north to south through the site.

Condition Statement

Moderate, stable

Management Issues

The succession of grassland to scrub is the most pressing ecological issue on this site. If areas of better grassland are allowed to scrub over, as has already happened, it would be very difficult to fully recover their condition. Some scrub clearance has taken place to the north of the lagoon.

Review Schedule

Site selected: 1993

Site Reviewed: October 2007

July 2017, northern fields separated into new R41 Round Hill Pastures LoWS.

Rochford Local Wildlife Site Description

Site reference: R25

Site name: Hyde Wood, Ashingdon

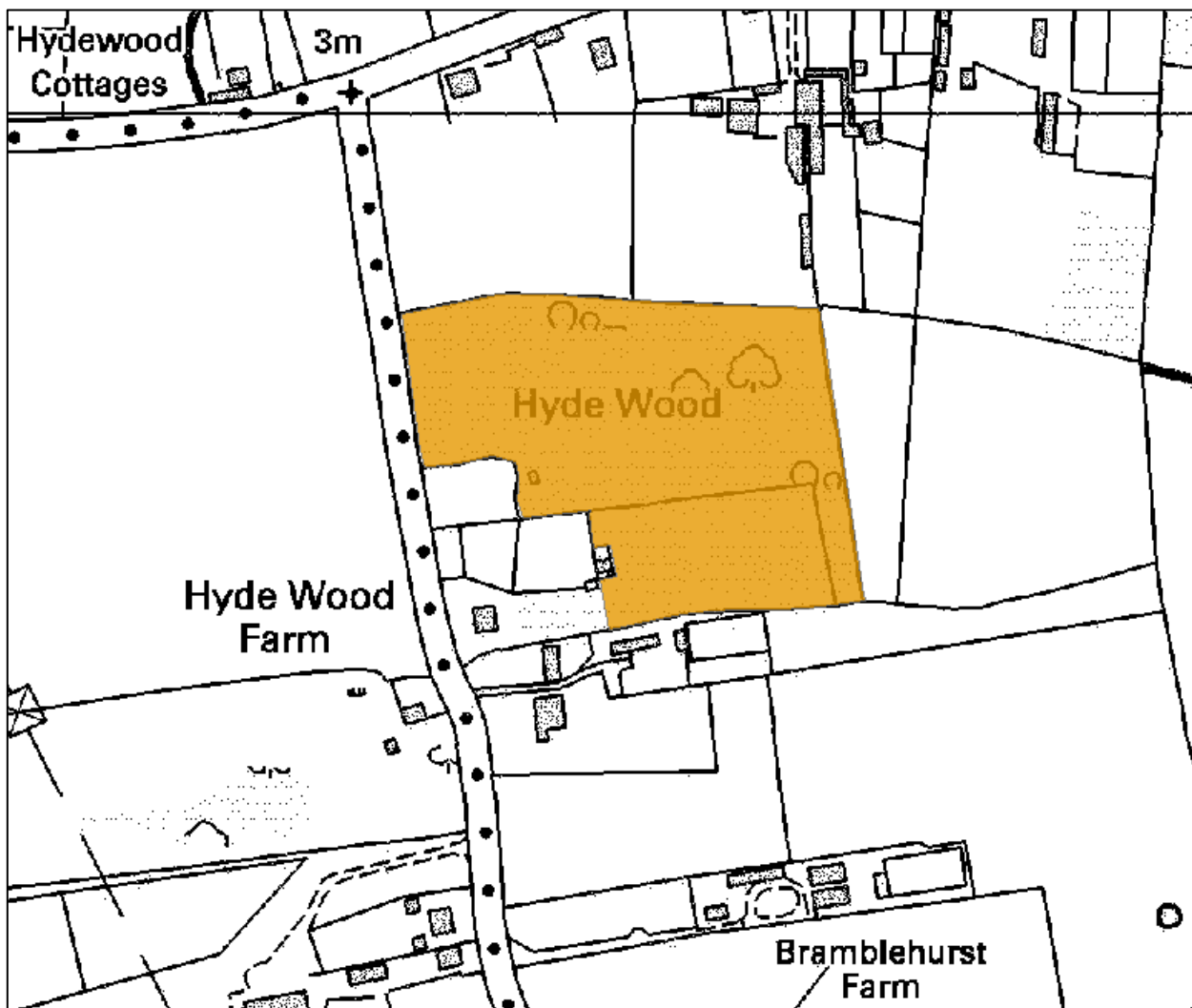
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TQ 877938

Site area: 2.9 ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC1 Ancient woodland

Boundary Map



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Site Description

This small, partly ancient wood is isolated on the plain to the east of Ashingdon. It consists of secondary Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) woodland around the margins with Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) coppice stools centrally.

The understorey includes Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Field Maple and Elder (*Sambucus nigra*) with Buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*), Dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*), Crab Apple (*Malus sylvestris*), Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*) and Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) on the boundary.

The ground flora is poorly recorded in recent years, but includes Red Campion (*Silene dioica*), Germander Speedwell (*Veronica chamaedrys*), Wood Avens (*Geum urbanum*) and Honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*) in the secondary areas, with Spurge Laurel (*Daphne laureola*) and the Essex Red List Greater Butterfly Orchid (*Platanthera chlorantha*).

Site Selection Rationale

From past documentary evidence the core of Hyde Wood can be shown to be ancient, allowing the use of the HC1 Ancient Woodland Sites criterion. However, two-thirds of its area was cleared to grassland in the late 19th Century, only to re-establish as secondary woodland during the 20th Century. These areas are included under the HC2 Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites criterion.

Priority Habitats (Habitats of Principal Importance in England)

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Ownership and Access

The site is believed to be in private ownership. It can be viewed from the public road that runs along the western boundary.

Condition Statement

Moderate, stable

Management Issues

There is no evidence of any recent conservation management within the wood.

Review Schedule

Site selected: 1993

Site Reviewed: October 2007, no change
July 2017, no change

NB There is no site description for R26 as Doggetts Pond is recommended for Deletion from the LoWS Register

Rochford Local Wildlife Site Description

Site reference: R27

Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TQ 882895

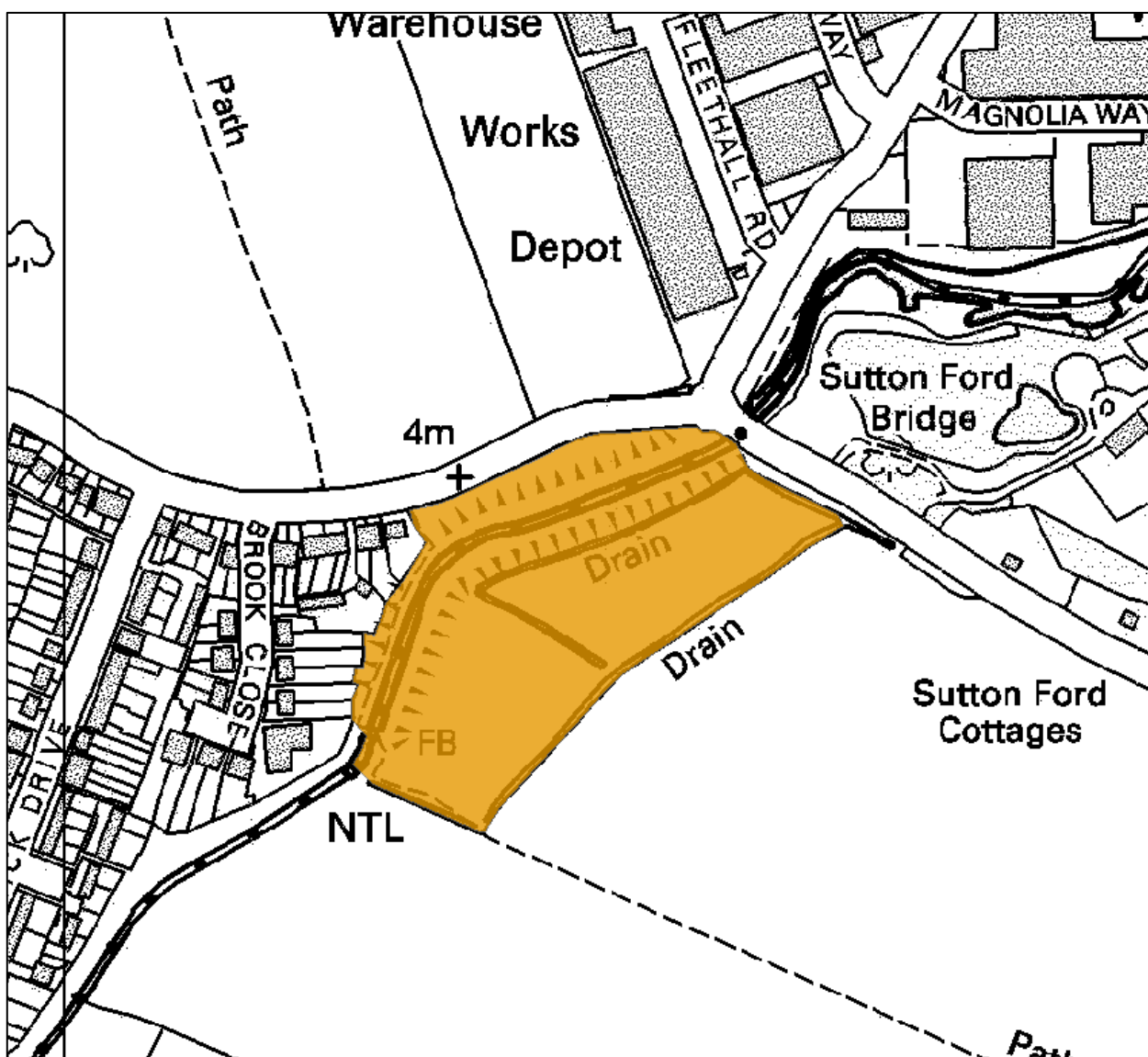
Site name: Sutton Ford Bridge Pasture, Sutton

Site area: 2.5 ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC11 – Other Neutral Grasslands
- HC21 – Coastal Grazing Marsh
- SC19 – Important invertebrate assemblages

Boundary Map



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Site Description

This small section of remnant grazing marsh and associated seawall, at the tidal limit of Prittle Brook, has a very rich flora, indicative of its antiquity and lack of improvement. Although the channel flood defences were modified in the 1960s, the majority of the site has remained largely unchanged since the end of the 19th Century, at least.

The grassland habitat includes Meadow Barley (*Hordeum secalinum*), Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*), Timothy (*Phleum pratense*), Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*), Meadow Foxtail (*Alopecurus pratensis*) and Marsh Foxtail (*Alopecurus geniculatus*) with Common Bird's-foot-trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), Spreading Meadow-grass (*Poa humilis*), Red Bartsia (*Odontites vernus*), Fleabane (*Pulicaria dysenterica*), Spiny Rest-harrow (*Oenoplos spinosa*) and the Essex Red Data List species

Pepper Saxifrage (*Silau silaus*) and Subterranean Clover (*Trifolium subterraneum*).

The drains crossing the site, with obvious saline intrusion, support Sea Club-rush (*Bolboschoenus maritimus*), Celery-leaved Buttercup (*Ranunculus sceleratus*), Sea Arrow-grass (*Triglochin maritima*), Lesser Sea Spurrey (*Spergularia media*), Saltmarsh Rush (*Juncus gerardii*), Fools Water-cress (*Apium nodosum*) and Sea Plantain (*Plantago maritima*).

The sea wall and its folding support populations of Divided Sedge (*Carex divisa*), Stiff Saltmarsh-grass (*Puccinellia rupestris*), Slender Hare's-ear (*Bupleurum tenuissimum*) and Curved Hard-grass (*Parapholis incurva*), all Nationally Scarce. Between the seawall and the edge of Prittle Brook is a community of saltmarsh species including Sea Couch (*Elytrigia atherica*), Sea Aster (*Aster tripolium*), Common Sea Lavender (*Limonium vulgare*), Sea Milkwort (*Glaux maritima*) and Wild Celery (*Apium graveolens*) with a fringe of Common Reed.

To the north of the brook, the broad road verge is flowery with Wild Carrot (*Daucus carota*), Meadow Buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*), Common Bird's-foot-trefoil, Meadow Vetchling (*Lathyrus pratensis*) and some Spiny Rest-harrow.

A large number of nationally and locally rare and scarce invertebrate species have been recorded including the horse fly *Haematopota grandis*, the robberfly *Machimus cingulatus*, the beetles *Hypera ononidis* and *Longitarsus brunneus* and the solitary bees *Andrena fulvago*, *Lasioglossum pauxillum*, *Sphecodes niger* and *Sphecodes rubicundus*.

There are also populations of Common Lizard and Grass Snake on the site.

Site Selection Rationale

Old maps show that the core of the site is a remaining fragment of Coastal Grazing Marsh justifying the HC21 criterion, but some of the associated grassland does not have this status, although making a significant contribution to the site as a whole. The HC11 Other Neutral Grassland criterion is used to encompass these areas. None of the notable plant species is present in significant quantity to allow the application of SC1 Vascular Plants. The recorded invertebrate diversity is sufficient in quality and diversity to satisfy the requirements of the SC28 Important Invertebrate Assemblages criterion.

Priority Habitats (Habitats of Principal Importance in England)

Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh

Ownership and Access

The site is believed to be in private ownership, but it is crossed by a public footpath.

Condition Statement

Good, stable

Management Issues

Scrub invasion is a constant threat to open grassland habitats such as this, but over-grazing could also affect the overall diversity of the site.

Review Schedule

Site selected: October 2007

Site Reviewed: July 2017, grassland to the north of Prittle Brook added.

Rochford Local Wildlife Site Description

Site reference: R28

Site name: River Roach at Rochford,
Rochford/Stambridge

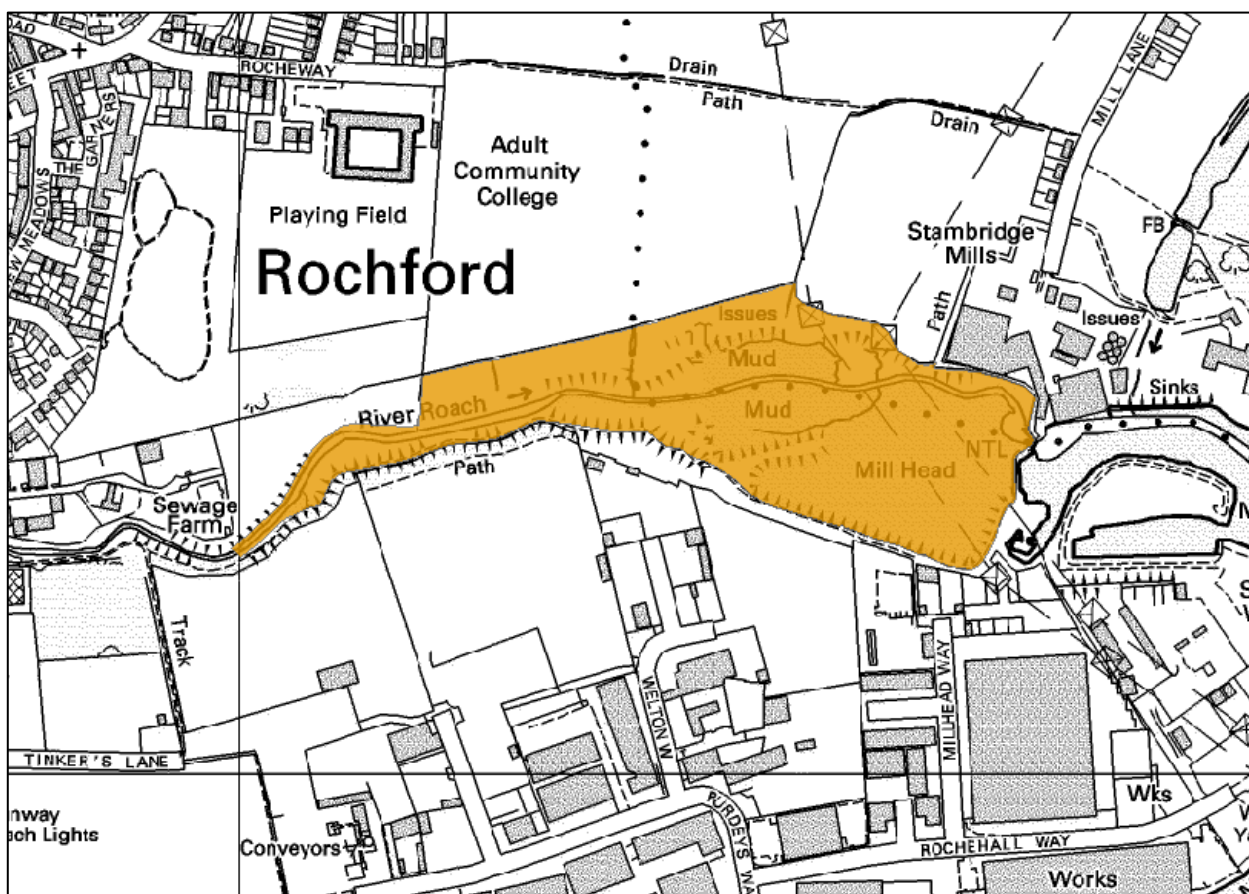
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TQ 883903

Site area: 7.1 ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC21 – Coastal Grazing Marsh
- HC23 – Saltmarsh and Mudflats

Boundary Map



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Site Description

This mosaic of coastal habitats, including saltmarsh and a fragment of grazing marsh, supports a good diversity of plant species and is likely to hold a diverse invertebrate fauna.

The river at this point is bounded by low seawalls and broadens to the east with an expanse of middle saltmarsh vegetation dominated by Sea Purslane (*Atriplex portulacoides*), with Common Sea-lavender (*Limonium vulgare*), Sea Aster (*Aster tripolium*), Common Saltmarsh-grass (*Puccinellia maritima*), Sea Plantain (*Plantago maritima*) and cord-grass (*Spartina* sp.). The banks of the saltmarsh support Sea Couch (*Elytrigia atherica*), Spear-leaved Orache (*Atriplex prostrata*), Grass-leaved Orache (*Atriplex littoralis*) and Sea Aster. At the western end of the site there are stands of Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) and Sea Club-rush (*Bolboschoenus maritimus*) beside the river.

The three fields, divided by ditches, are relict grazing marsh, overgrazed by horses and lack floristic diversity as a result. There is a reasonable diversity of grass species, including red fescue (*Festuca rubra*), Meadow Fox-tail (*Alopecurus pratensis*), Creeping Bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*), Soft-brome (*Bromus hordeaceus*) and Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*) with Hairy Sedge (*Carex hirsuta*). Herbaceous species include Lesser Stitchwort (*Stellaria graminea*), Smooth Tare (*Vicia tetrasperma*), Wild Carrot (*Daucus carota*), Weld (*Reseda lutea*) and, in places protected from horse-grazing, Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), Lady's

Bedstraw (*Galium verum*) and Oxeye daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*).

The ditches and parts of the fields that are occasionally inundated by the tide support species such as Saltmarsh Rush (*Juncus gerardii*), Greater Sea-spurrey (*Spergularia media*), Lesser Sea-spurrey (*Spergularia marina*), Sea Plantain, Common Saltmarsh-grass, Wild Celery (*Apium graveolens*) and the Nationally Scarce species Stiff Saltmarsh-grass (*Puccinellia rupestris*) and Curved Hard-grass (*Parapholis incurva*).

The exposed substrates in the seawall banks together with the nectar sources fields and the saltmarsh suggest that the site has good potential for invertebrates. The Red Data Book horsefly *Atylotus latistriatus* has been recorded.

Site Selection Rationale

The site is clearly a remaining fragment of grazing marsh and can be seen as such on maps from the latter half of the 19th Century, justifying the HC21 Coastal Grazing Marsh criterion. The intertidal habitats present are appropriate for the HC23 Saltmarsh and Mudflats. The HC15 Reedbeds criterion is not judged to be satisfied in this case, as the area is not significant enough. The populations of the two Nationally Scarce grasses are also not considered to be significant enough, in the context of the district as a whole, to justify the use of the SC 1 Vascular Plants criterion.

Priority Habitats (Habitats of Principal Importance in England)

Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh

Ownership and Access

Ownership is unknown, but the site is believed to be private. It can be viewed from a public footpath on the south side of the river.

Condition Statement

Poor, stable

Management Issues

The site has been over-grazed in recent years, which has adversely affected the floristic diversity and structure of the communities present.

Review Schedule

Site selected: October 2007

Site Reviewed: July 2017, former landfill to west removed as no longer meets criteria through succession.

Rochford Local Wildlife Site Description

Site reference: R29

Site name: Wood Sloppy, Stambridge

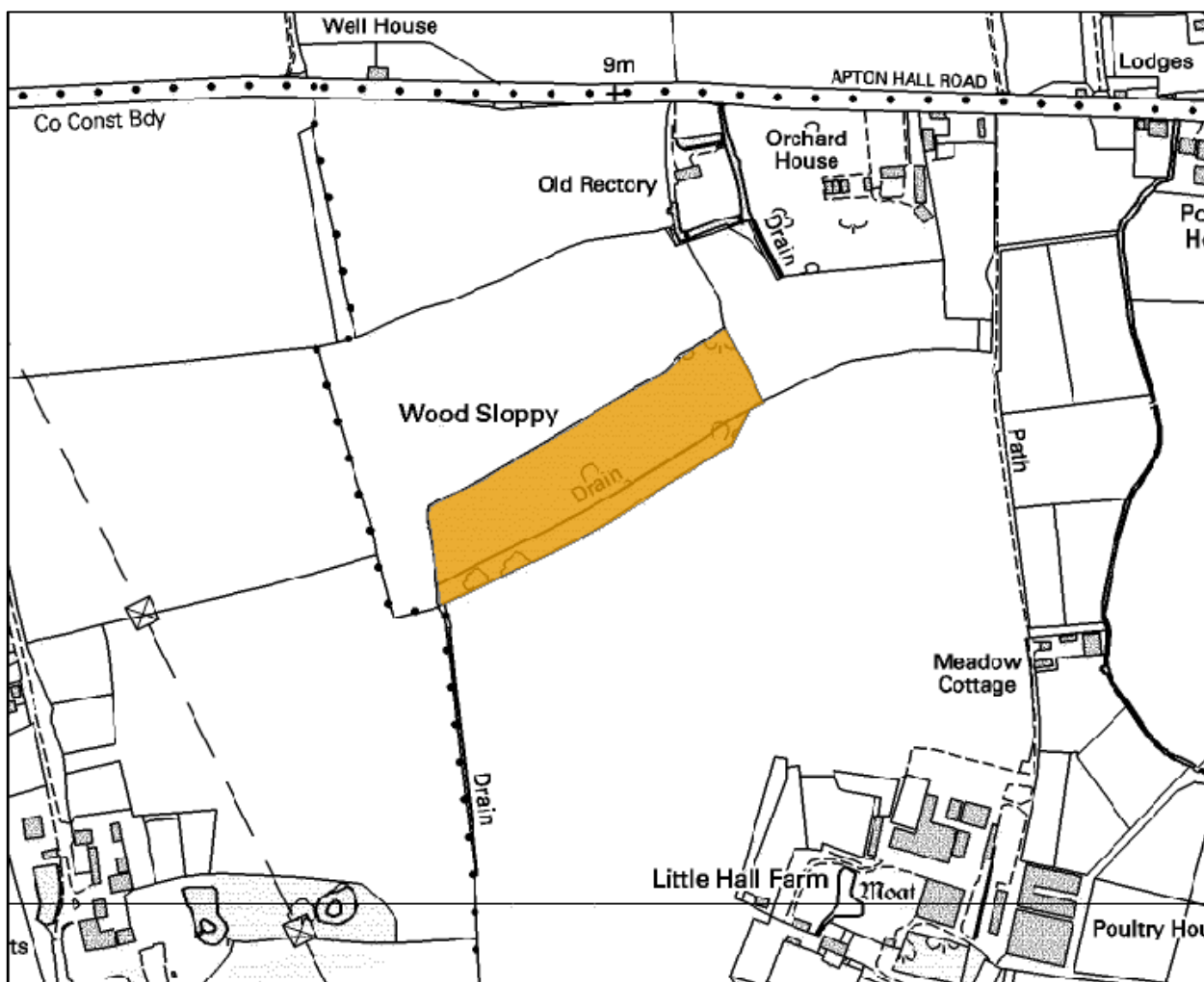
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TQ 885924

Site area: 2.2 ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC2 Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites

Boundary Map



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Site Description

The following species have been previously recorded for this small wood. It has a canopy of Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) over Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and Elder (*Sambucus nigra*).

Although not necessarily ancient, the southern boundary strip is certainly very old. As a result the ground flora is diverse with Moschatel (*Adoxa moschatellina*), Spurge Laurel (*Daphne laureola*), Butcher's Broom (*Ruscus aculeatus*) and Grass Vetchling (*Lathyrus nissolia*) having been recorded.

Site Selection Rationale

The origins of the site are unclear, but in the mid-19th Century there is a wooded strip along the southern edge and the remainder is open. However, the wood contains native woody species, with a good structure, and has a diverse ground flora, qualifying the site as Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland Priority Habitat and allowing the use of the HC2 criterion.

Priority Habitats (Habitats of Principal Importance in England)

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Ownership and Access

The site is owned and managed by a private landowner. There is no access and it is not adjacent to a road or public footpath.

Condition Statement

Moderate, stable

Management Issues

Unknown

Review Schedule

Site selected: 1993

Site Reviewed: October 2007, no change
July 2017, no change

Rochford Local Wildlife Site Description

Site reference: R30

Site name: Butts Hill Pond, Canewdon

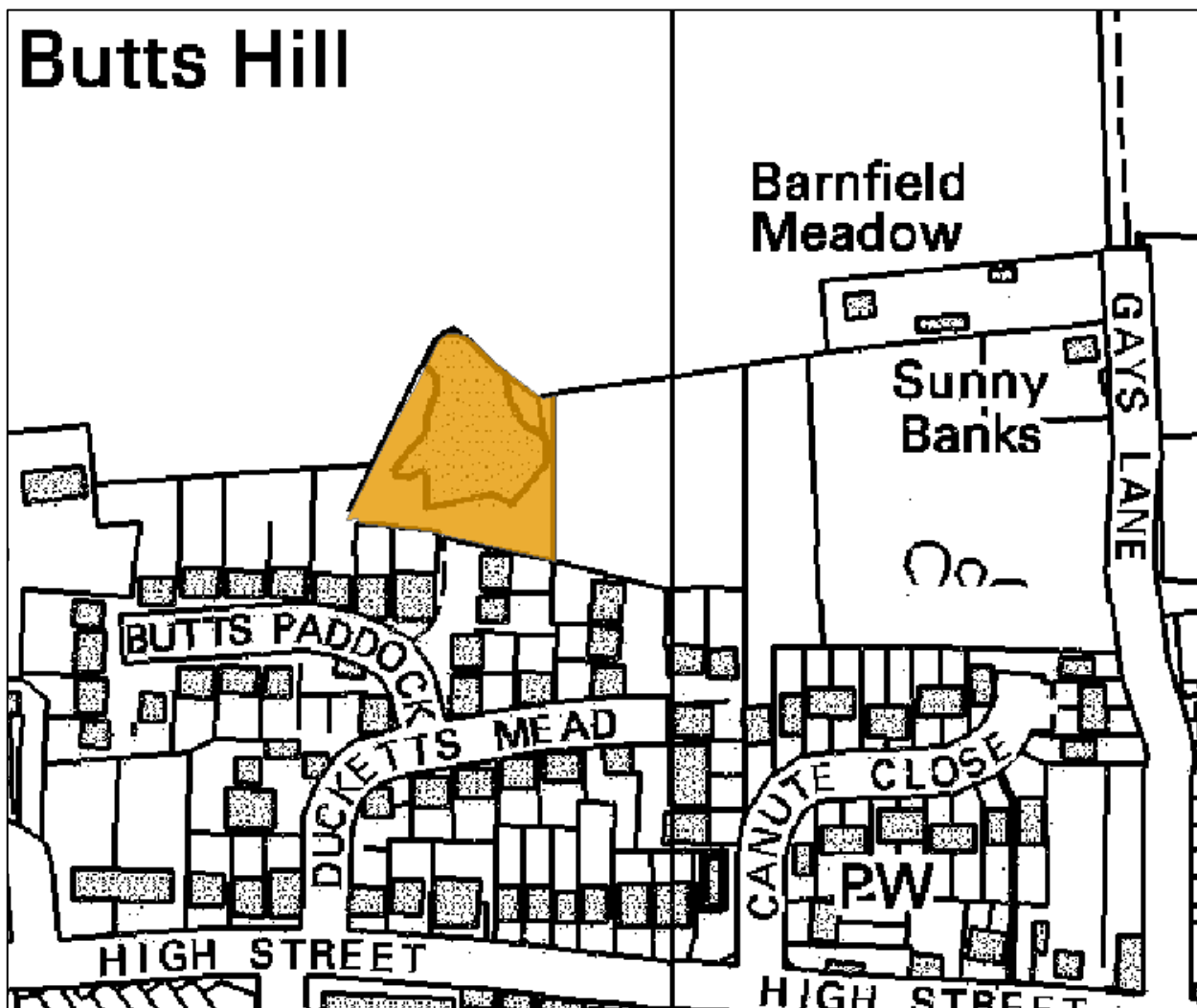
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TQ 899947

Site area: 0.3 ha

LoWS Selection Criteria: code and name. Can be found at:

- SC13 - Hotspots for Amphibian Diversity

Boundary Map



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Site Description

This site consists of a small pond surrounded by scrub and rough grassland. The pond supports populations of Great Crested and Smooth Newts, Common Frog and Common Toad, making it an important site for amphibian conservation.

The pond's marginal vegetation includes Yellow Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*), Sea Club-rush (*Bolboschoenus maritimus*), Gypsywort (*Lycopus europaeus*), Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) and Water Mint (*Mentha aquatica*). Surrounding the pond is dense Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), Sallow (*Salix cinerea*) and Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) scrub with Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and occasional Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*).

A small meadow contains Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), Wild Carrot (*Daucus carota*), Oxeye Daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*), Meadow Foxtail (*Alopecurus pratensis*) and Meadow Crane's-bill (*Geranium pratense*).

Common Lizard and Grass Snake are also present.

Site Selection Rationale

The presence of more than three amphibian species justifies the use of the SC13 Hotspots for Amphibian Diversity, although current survey data would strengthen the site's status. The habitats present are of insufficient quality to allow the application of any habitat criteria.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England (Priority Habitats)

Ponds

Ownership and Access

The site's ownership is unknown, but it is managed under the guidance of Essex Wildlife Trust.

Condition Statement

Poor (pond)

Management Issues

The pond's condition appears to be poor, with low water quality. The meadow appears to be well-managed.

Review Schedule

Site selected: 1993

Site Reviewed: October 2007, no change
July 2017, no change

Rochford Local Wildlife Site Description

Site reference: R31

Site name: The Finches, Canewdon

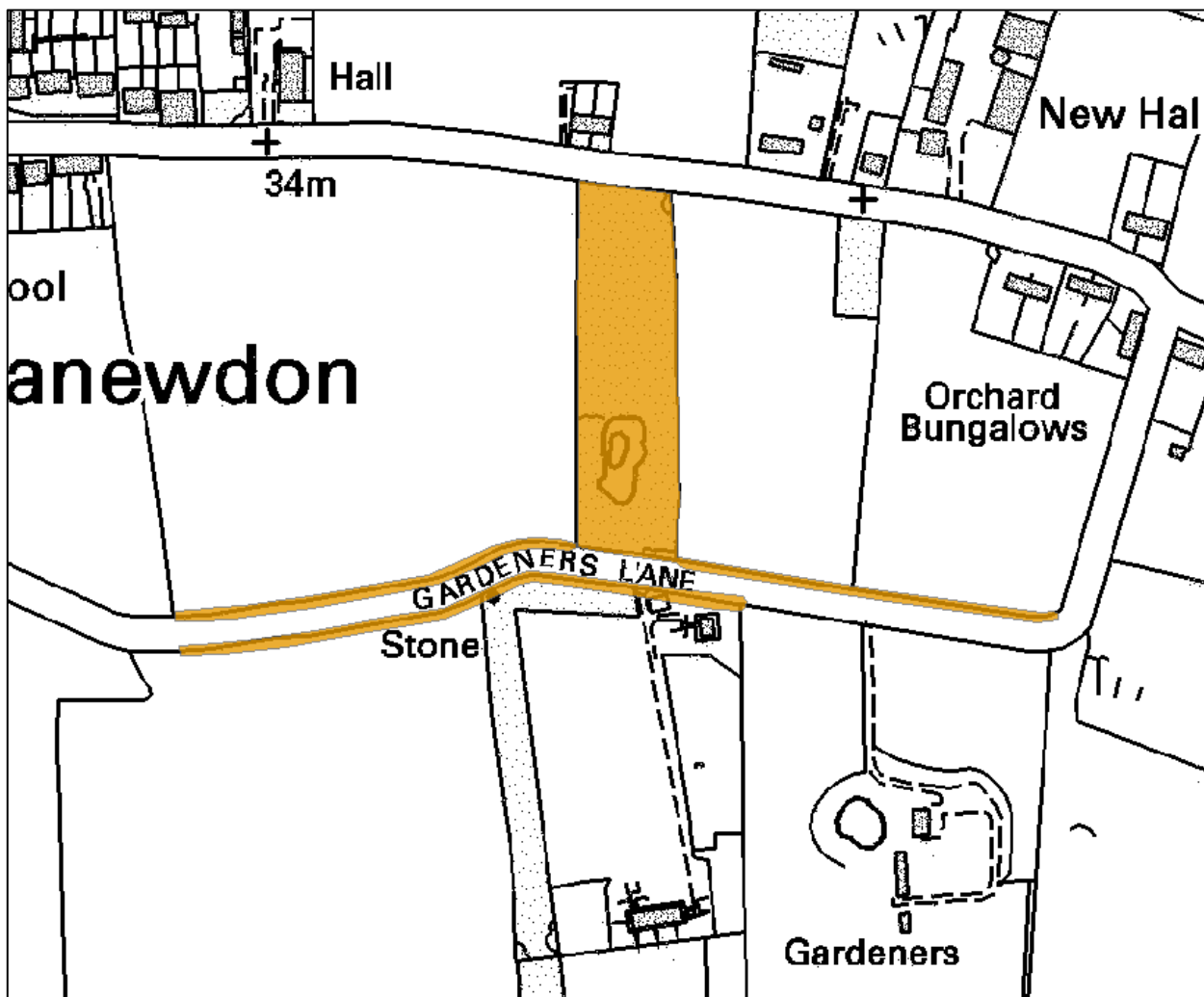
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TQ 905944

Site area: 1.2 ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- SC20 – Notable ‘flagship’ macro-invertebrates

Boundary Map



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Site Description

The Finches comprises young woodland and scrub with patches of grassland and a central pond, together with adjacent road verges.

The developing young woodland includes English Elm (*Ulmus procera*), Pedunculate oak (*Quercus robur*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) with dense Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), and Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) scrub. The site supports a good range of common grassland and woodland plants including Agrimony (*Agrimonia eupatoria*), Fleabane (*Pulicaria dysenterica*), Meadow vetchling (*Lathyrus pratensis*), Smooth Tare (*Vicia tetrasperma*) and Meadow Foxtail (*Alopecurus pratensis*).

The pond's marginal vegetation includes Water Mint (*Mentha aquatica*), Greater Bulrush (*Typha latifolia*) and Sea Club-rush (*Bolboschoenus maritimus*) with Rigid Hornwort (*Ceratophyllum demersum*), Bittersweet (*Solanum dulcamara*) and Great Willowherb (*Epilobium hirsutum*).

The most significant feature of the site is its population of Glow-worms, considered to be one of the largest in Essex and it is for this that the site, including the adjacent road verges on Gardeners Lane, is designated. The

verges themselves are unremarkable.

Site Selection Rationale

Good records exist for the Glow Worm population, demonstrating the value of the site within the context of the county and justifying the SC20 criterion.

Priority Habitats (Habitats of Principal Importance in England)

None

Ownership and Access

This site is owned by a local education charity. There is no public right of way through the site, but it is open to visitors.

Condition Statement

Good, declining

Management Issues

The verges that support a significant proportion of the Glow Worm population are not managed sympathetically at present. The balance of habitat within the Finches itself has shifted towards scrub and rank grass suggesting that more management effort is required. Swamp Stonecrop (*Crassula helmsii*), an invasive alien water plant, is present in the pond, but is not dominant.

Review Schedule

Site selected: 1993

Site Reviewed: October 2007, road verges added
July 2017, unsuitable verges removed

Rochford Local Wildlife Site Description

Site reference: R32

Site name: Lion Creek Meadow, Canewdon

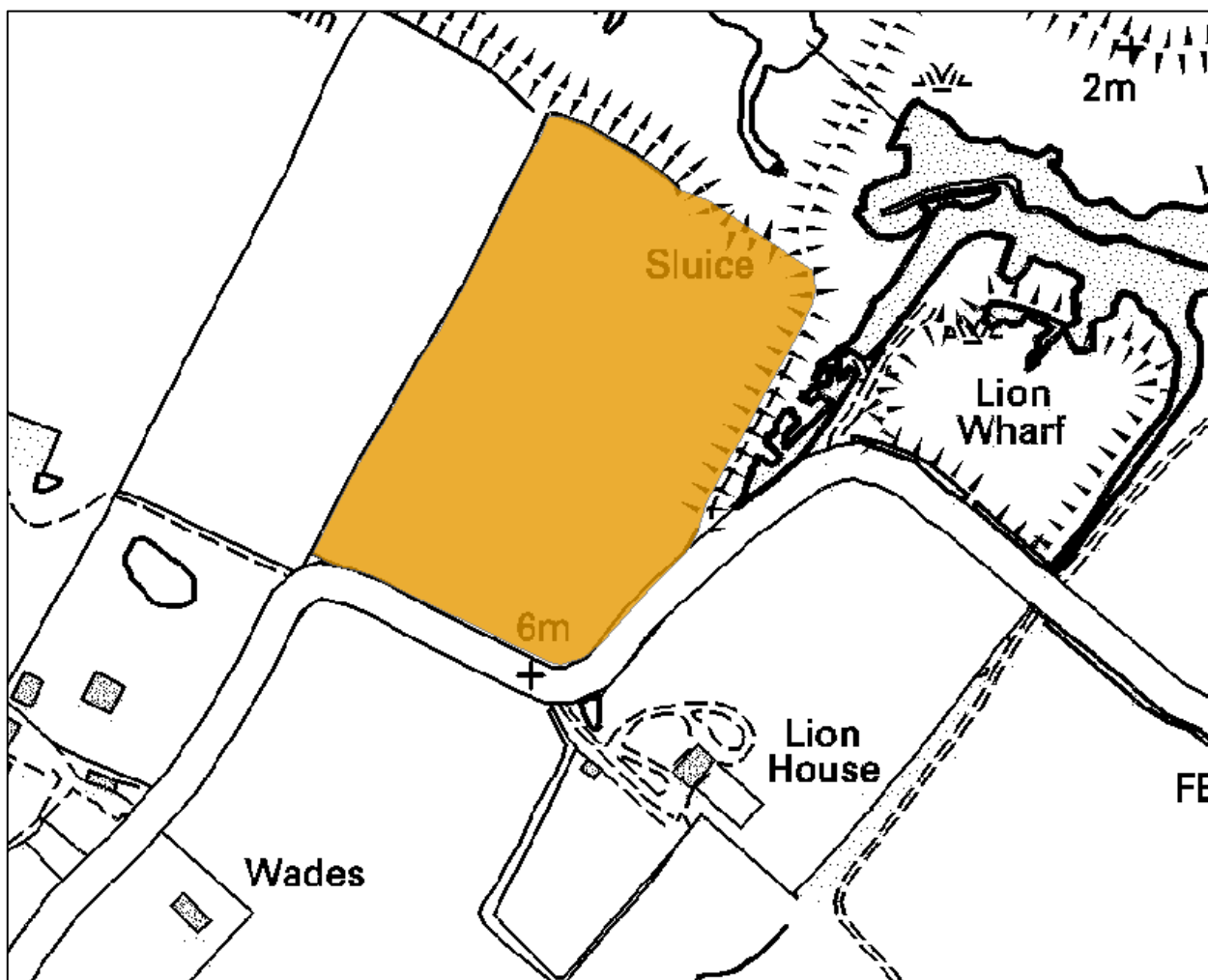
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TQ922947

Site area: 3.1 hectares

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC11 Other Neutral Grassland

Boundary Map



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Site Description

This flower-rich, largely unimproved grassland is located adjacent to Lion Creek, which forms part of the River Crouch SSSI.

A wide variety of grasses is found, including Sweet Vernal Grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*), Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*), Meadow Barley (*Hordeum secalinum*) and Yellow Oat-grass (*Trisetum flavescens*). The herb flora includes Meadow Vetchling (*Lathyrus pratensis*), Grass Vetchling (*Lathyrus nissolia*), Meadow Buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*), Lady's Bedstraw (*Galium verum*), Yellow Rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*), Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), Hairy Tare (*Vicia hirsuta*) and Lesser Stitchwort (*Stellaria graminea*).

The ditch bordering the sea wall has a stand of Sea Club-rush (*Bolboschoenus maritimus*) and supports the Essex Red List Scarce Emerald damselfly. The meadow is good complimentary habitat to the coastal SSSI, providing valuable invertebrate habitat for groups such as butterflies, including Marbled White, and grasshoppers.

Site Selection Rationale

Although this remains a valuable grassland site in the local context, with a good diversity of grasses and herbaceous species, there is some doubt as to whether or not the community present can be considered to be NVC MG5 grassland. It is considered to be more likely that it is old coastal grassland that has been enhanced by the application of green hay, hence the use of the HC11 Other Neutral Grassland criterion. There is insufficient data to support the use of an invertebrate selection criterion, although it is likely to support a diverse assemblage and some notable species.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England

None

Ownership and Access

The site is owned and managed by Essex Wildlife Trust and is open to the public.

Condition Statement

Good

Management Issues

False Oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*) is locally abundant in the meadow, suggesting that current levels of management are insufficient at present. A partial spring cut would help to control this and other coarser grass species while retaining structural diversity.

Review Schedule

Site selected: October 2007

Site Reviewed: July 2017, no change

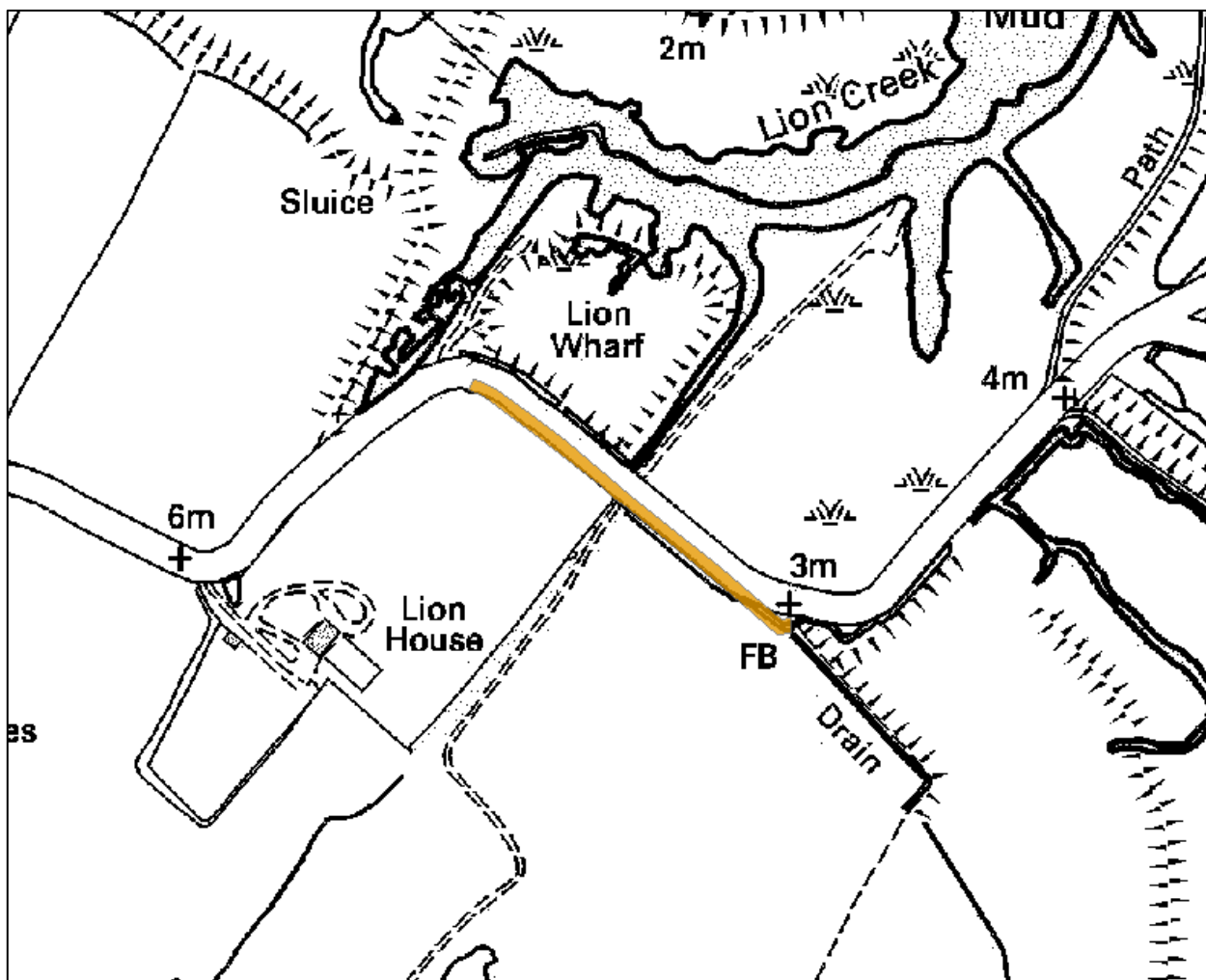
Rochford Local Wildlife Site Description

Site reference: R33	Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TQ 923946 to TQ 925945
Site name: Canewdon Special Roadside Verge, Canewdon	Site area: 0.1 ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC23 Saltmarsh and Mudflats

Boundary Map



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Site Description

This section of road verge was originally identified on the strength of it supporting the last known population of the Essex Emerald moth in the UK, which is now extinct. However, the verge still comprises saltmarsh vegetation on either side of a tidal ditch.

The site includes a range of species typical of Essex saltmarshes including Common Saltmarsh-grass (*Puccinellia maritima*), Sea Purslane (*Atriplex portulacoides*), Common Sea-lavender (*Limonium vulgare*), Sea Aster (*Aster tripolium*), cord-grass (*Spartina* sp.), Sea Plantain (*Plantago maritima*) and Sea Arrow-grass (*Triglochin maritima*). This habitat grades into coastal grassland dominated by Sea Couch (*Elytrigia atherica*), Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*), Saltmarsh Rush (*Juncus gerardii*) and Sea Wormwood (*Seriphidium maritimum*).

Site Selection Rationale

Although only a small fragment, the site supports saltmarsh habitat and is outside of the boundary of the adjacent SSSI, qualifying it under HC23 Saltmarsh and Mudflats.

Habitats of Principal Importance in England (Priority Habitats)

Coastal Saltmarsh

Ownership and Access

The site is owned by Essex County Council and managed under the Special Road Verges project.

Condition Statement

Moderate, stable

Management Issues

Although the saltmarsh vegetation is essentially healthy, the site is prone to the dumping of rubbish.

Review Schedule

Site selected: 1993

Site Reviewed: October 2007, no change

July 2017, no change

Rochford Local Wildlife Site Description

Site reference: R34

Site name: Barling Pits and Barling Hall Marsh, Barling Magna

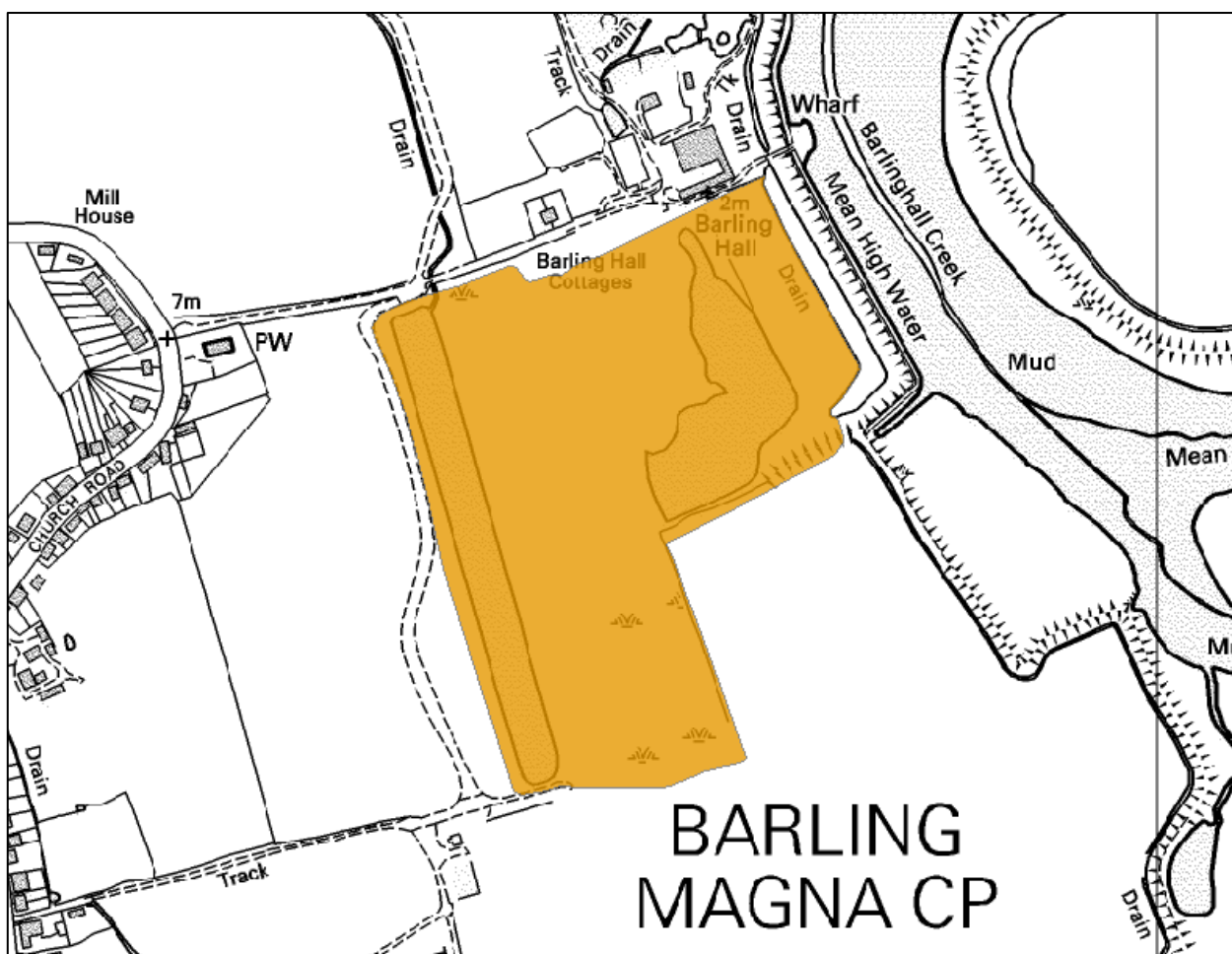
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TQ 935896

Site area: 12.7 ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC11 – Other Neutral Grasslands
- HC15 – Reedbeds
- HC27 – Post-industrial Sites
- HC29 – Habitat Extension Mosaics

Boundary Map



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Site Description

This site is made up of former sand and gravel workings now being managed as a nature reserve by a wildfowling group.

The western part of the site consists of a long narrow lagoon with a fringe of Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) and Sea Club-rush (*Bolboschoenus maritimus*) with scrubby banks.

The majority of the site consists of a mosaic of reedbed, pools, tall ruderal, rough grassland and scattered scrub with some short open grassland. Typical species include Goat's-rue (*Galega officinalis*), Common Bird's-foot-trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), Teasel (*Dipsacus fullonum*), and Common Ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*).

The seawall folding on the eastern edge of the site is flower-rich, supporting Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), Burnet-saxifrage (*Pimpinella saxifraga*), Common Bird's-foot-trefoil, Common Vetch (*Vicia sativa*),

Fleabane (*Pulicaria dysenterica*) and Hoary Ragwort (*Senecio erucifolius*) amongst a sward made up of Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*), Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*) and timothy (*Phleum sp.*).

Southern Marsh Orchids (*Dactylorhiza praetermissa*) were formerly recorded in a damp ditch at the southern end of the site, but now appear to have gone. Pochard, a nationally rare breeding species of duck, has bred on the site.

The site supports an important invertebrate population due, in part, to the topography and substrate present. Recorded Essex Red Listed species include Hairy Dragonfly (*Brachytron pratense*), the spider *Zodarion italicum*, the solitary bees *Andrena florea*, *A. fulvago*, *A. labialis*, *Sphecodes longulus*, *S. reticulatus*, *Nomada fucata* and the solitary wasp *Passaloecus clypealis*, amongst many others.

Site Selection Rationale

The site is by definition post-industrial and the habitats present are of the appropriate type and sufficient extent to justify the HC27 criterion. Significant beds of Common Reed are present leading to the use of the HC15 criterion and the grassland of the included section of seawall folding fits the HC11 Other Neutral Grasslands criterion through its composition, structure and evident lack of agricultural improvement. The extent of the site is defined using the HC29 Habitat Extension Mosaics criteria, including patches of less significant habitats that nonetheless contribute to the sites overall diversity.

Priority Habitats (Habitats of Principal Importance in England)

Reedbeds

Ownership and Access

The site is owned and managed by Kent Wildfowling and Conservation Association. There is no public access, but the site can be viewed from the adjacent seawall to the east and the public footpath to the north.

Condition Statement

Good

Management Issues

Details of management strategy are unknown, but the most significant issue will be succession of habitats toward scrub and the consequent lack of open habitats.

Review Schedule

Site selected: October 2007

Site Reviewed: August 2017; lagoon and seawall folding added.

Rochford Local Wildlife Site Description

Site reference: R35

Site name: Star Lane Pits, Great Wakering

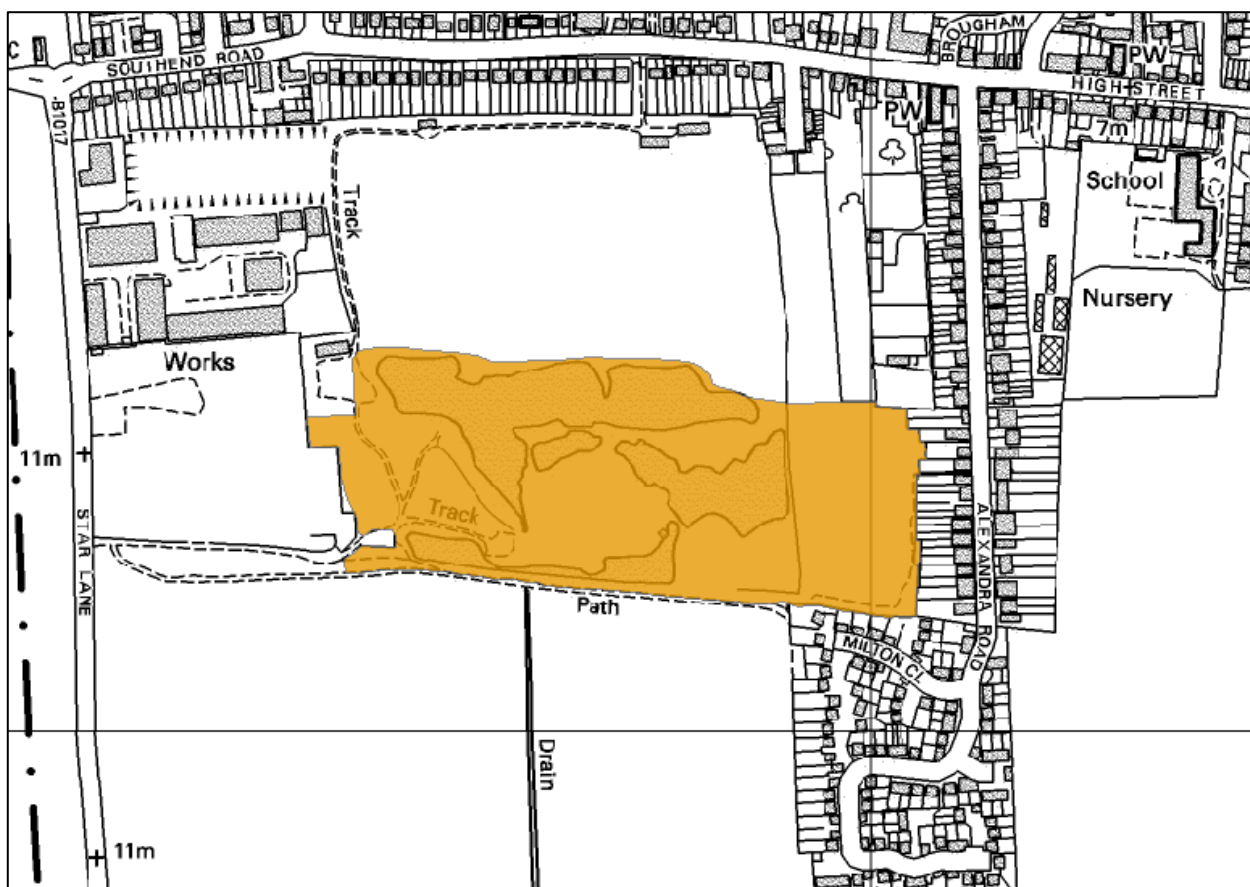
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TQ 937873

Site area: 8.4 ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC27 – Post-industrial Sites
- HC28 – Small-Component Mosaics

Boundary Map



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Site Description

These former clay pits, first dug between the wars, with overlying sands and gravel form an interesting mosaic of scrub, grassland, lakes and wet woodland. The site also has geological interest in the form of the only exposed sections of brickearth in Essex.

The scrub at the eastern end of the site is mainly Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) and Grey Willow (*Salix cinerea*) with some Dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*), elm (*Ulmus* sp.) and Wild Clematis (*Clematis vitalba*). Remaining small areas of open grassland in this part of the site support a variety of herbaceous species including Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), Perforate St. John's-wort (*Hypericum perforatum*), Common Vetch (*Vicia sativa*) and Red clover (*Trifolium pratense*). Adjacent to the eastern site boundary area number of mature Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Wild Cherry (*Prunus avium*)

More recently disturbed areas at the western end of the site support open grassland and short ephemeral vegetation with scattered scrub of Hawthorn, Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) and Butterfly Bush (*Buddleja davidii*). Herbaceous species include: Narrow-leaved Bird's-foot-trefoil (*Lotus glaber*), Hairy St John's-wort (*Hypericum hirsutum*), Creeping Cinquefoil (*Potentilla repens*), Wall Rocket (*Diplotaxis muralis*), Common Centaury (*Centaureum erythraea*), Red Bartsia (*Odontites vernus*), Fleabane (*Pulicaria dysenterica*) and Wild Carrot (*Daucus carota*). The Essex Red List species Pyramidal Orchid (*Anacamptis pyramidalis*) has also

been recorded.

The lakes, managed for angling, have beds of Bulrush (*Typha latifolia*), Narrow-leaved Bulrush (*Typha angustifolia*), Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) and Sea Club-rush (*Bolboschoenus maritimus*). Of interest is the small free floating liverwort, *Riccia fluitans*. The rare Essex water-plant Hemlock Water-dropwort (*Oenanthe crocata*) has also been recorded. Around the lakes willow (*Salix* spp.) woodland is developing, some of which is seasonally wet. The ground flora is poor, being dominated by Common Nettle (*Urtica dioica*), but with some Male Fern (*Dryopteris filix-mas*).

Evidence of Water Vole activity has been recorded within the site along with populations of Common Lizard and Slow Worm. The Schedule 1 bird species Cetti's Warbler has also been recorded and the habitat present would be suitable for breeding.

The site's invertebrate community includes a large number of nationally significant and Essex Red list species including the spider *Zilla diodia*, the bees *Nomada fucata*, *Odynerus melanocephalus*, *Andrena tibialis* and *Sphecodes spinulosus*, and the wasp *Ancistrocerus parietum*. It is the only recent site in Essex for the Nationally Scarce bee fly *Bombylius discolor*. Exposures of brickearth and other bare substrates are important nesting habitats for these species, while the flower-rich parts of the site provide foraging habitat.

Site Selection Rationale

The range of habitats present and the majority of the site's history as a brick pit justify the use of the HC27 Post-industrial habitat criteria and this is supported by the available species records, particularly of significant invertebrates. The eastern end of the site was never worked, and is not of sufficient quality to satisfy a main habitat criterion, but it provides a valuable part of the habitat block and so the HC28 criterion is used to define the extent of the site.

Priority Habitats (Habitats of Principal Importance in England)

Open mosaic habitats on previously developed land

Ownership and Access

The site is believed to be in private ownership. A public right of way runs along the southern edge of the worked site, crossing the scrub at the eastern end to join Alexandra Road.

Condition Statement

Good, Declining

Management Issues

Scrub species are spreading on the site, reducing the extent of grassland and other open habitats to the detriment of the floristic and structural diversity of the site. A small quantity of the invasive aquatic species Floating Pennywort (*Hydrocotyle ranunculoides*) was found in one of the lakes.

Review Schedule

Site selected: 1993

Site Reviewed: October 2007, no change

July 2017, minor boundary changes at western end and addition to eastern end.

Rochford Local Wildlife Site Description

Site reference: R36

Site name: Paglesham Seawall, Paglesham

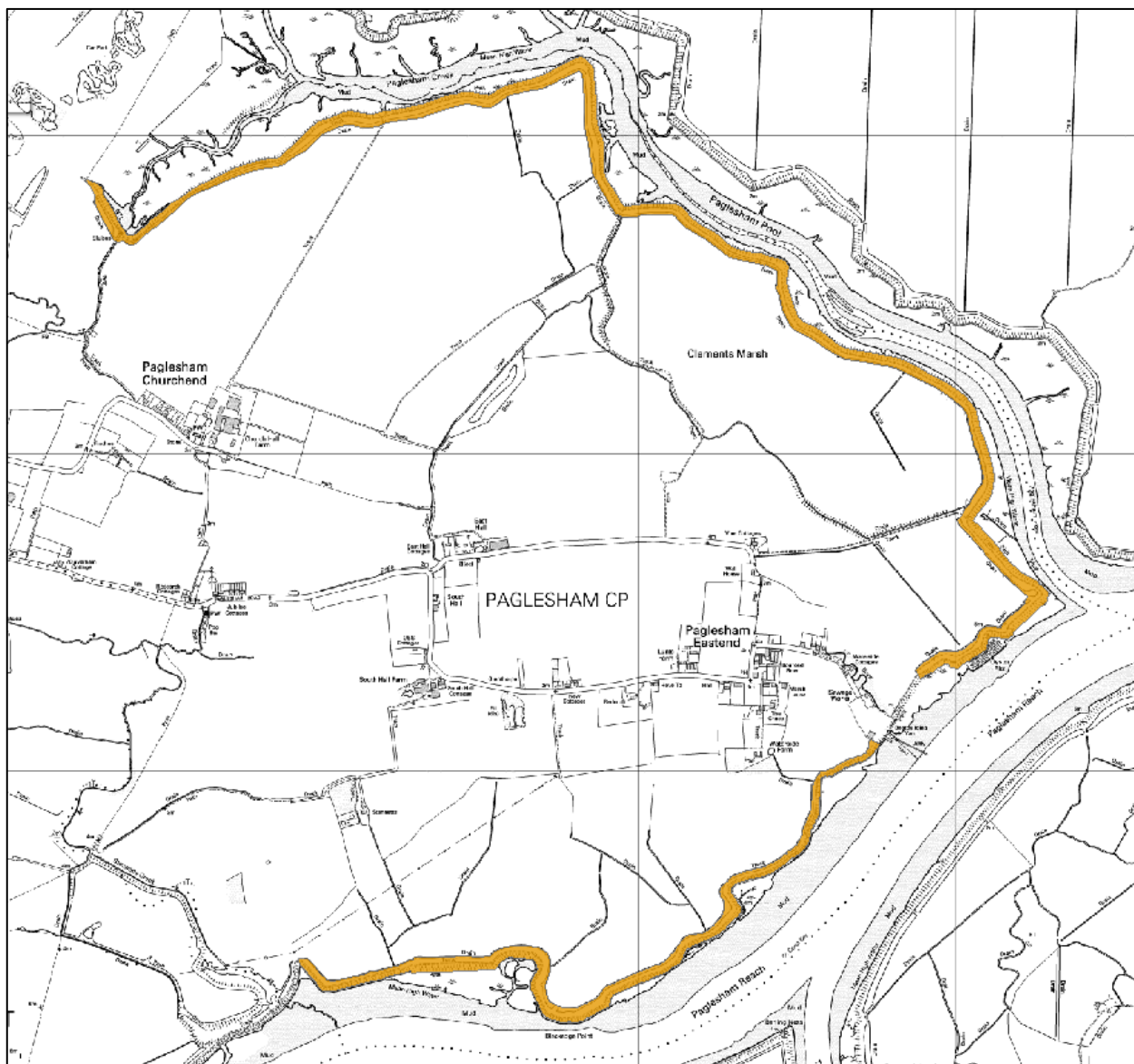
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TQ 945917

Site area: 27 ha

LoWS Selection Criteria

- HC11 – Other Neutral Grasslands
- HC28 – Small-component Mosaics
- SC1 – Vascular Plants
- SC12 – Breeding Water Vole Colonies

Boundary Map



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Site Description

This site includes approximately 4.5 miles of seawall, amounting to a very significant extent of coastal grassland habitat situated adjacent to the Crouch and Roach Estuaries Site of Special Scientific Interest. Adjoining borrowdyke habitat is included within the site.

The grassland habitat is largely dominated by Sea Couch (*Elytrigia atherica*) with False Oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*) in places. However, there is considerable diversity in grass species across the whole site, including Meadow Barley (*Hordeum secalinum*), Yellow Oat-grass (*Trisetum flavescens*), Meadow Fox-tail (*Alopecurus pratensis*), Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*), Sweet Vernal Grass (*Anthoxanthum*

odoratum) and Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*).

Herbaceous diversity varies in response to the management regime and ground conditions, but species include Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), Spiny Restharrow (*Ononis spinosa*), Grass Vetchling (*Lathyrus nissolia*), Common Bird's-foot Trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), Narrow-leaved Bird's-foot-trefoil (*Lotus angustifolius*), Greater Bird's-foot-Trefoil (*Lotus pedunculatus*) and scattered patches of the Nationally Scarce Slender Hare's-ear (*Bupleurum tenuissimum*).

Areas of the folding subject to the seepage of seawater through the wall are of particular significance supporting a distinct community of coastal plants including Sea Aster (*Aster tripolium*), Sea Purslane (*Atriplex portulacoides*), Common Saltmarsh-grass (*Puccinellia maritima*), Greater and Lesser Sea Spurrey (*Spergularia media* and *S. marina*) and Hard-grass (*Parapholis strigosa*) together with the Nationally Scarce Stiff Saltmarsh-grass (*Puccinellia rupestris*), Sea Barley (*Hordeum marinum*) and, on their margins, Sea Clover (*Trifolium squamosum*).

The borrowdyke and its margins support extensive stands of Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) and Sea Club-rush (*Bolboschoenus maritimus*) with associated Lesser Bulrush (*Typha angustifolia*) and scattered scrub. A population of Water Voles is known to be present.

Site Selection Rationale

The combination of typical coastal grassland and saltmarsh vegetation is of significant conservation value and is best covered by the HC11 Other Neutral Grassland criterion, as the lack of regular tidal inundation prevents the seepage areas from qualifying as coastal saltmarsh. The HC28 Small-component Mosaics criterion is used to define the extent of the site, taking in borrowdyke habitats and associated scrub.

The SC1 Vascular Plants criterion is applied on the strength of the extensive stands of the Nationally Scarce Sea Clover and Sea Barley but it is supported by the presence of Stiff Saltmarsh-grass and Slender Hare's-ear. The continued presence of a Water Vole population justifies the application of SC12 Breeding Water Vole Colonies criterion.

Priority Habitats (Habitats of Principal Importance in England)

Reedbeds

Ownership and Access

Ownership is unknown, but the site is believed to be private. A public footpath runs along the top of the sea wall throughout the site.

Management Issues

The current management regime is unknown, but there is evidence of periodic cutting of the folding and seawall banks. Some disturbance of the folding, by cutting or vehicular access is important in maintaining the open character of the seepages.

Condition Statement

Good, stable

Review Schedule

Site selected: 1993

Site Reviewed: October 2007, no change

July 2017, addition of northern section between Paglesham Eastend and Paglesham Churchend

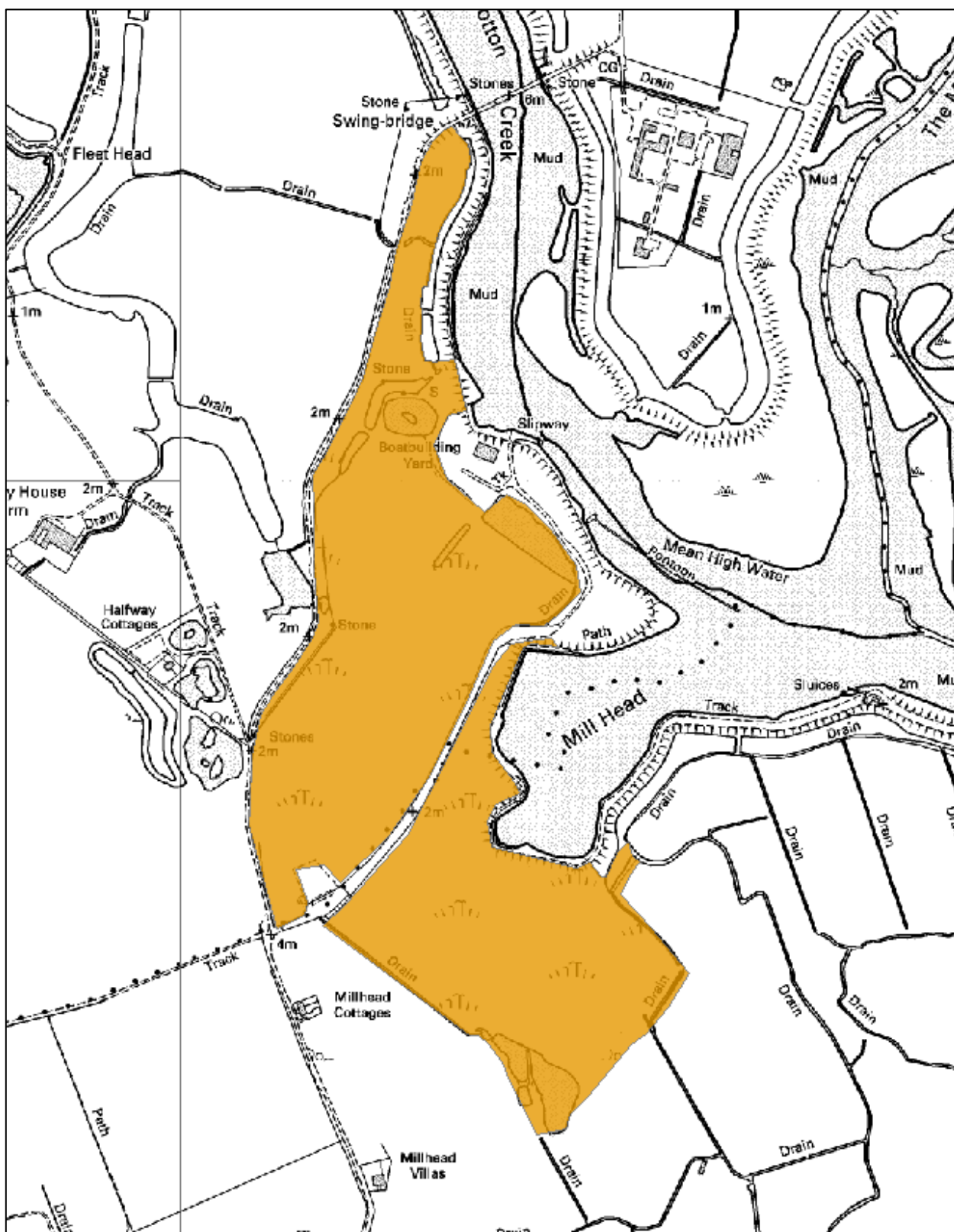
Rochford Local Wildlife Site Description

Site reference: R37	Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TQ 953886
Site name: Waking Former Landfill Site, Waking	Site area: 26.3 hectare

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC28 – Small-component Mosaics

Boundary Map



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Site Description

This landfill site was closed in 2001 and the low sculpted domes now support coastal grassland communities in a mosaic with scrub, and on lower ground, swamp and open water. The site is divided into two sections by the access track to Wakering Boatyard.

The southern section is dominated by Common Couch (*Elytrigia repens*), False Oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*) and Cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*) with extensive stands of Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) scrub. Other grass species present where the sward is more open include Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*), timothy (*Phleum* sp.), Meadow Foxtail (*Alopecurus pratensis*) and Soft-brome (*Bromus hordeaceus*), while Sea Couch (*Elytrigia atherica*) is locally frequent.

Floristic diversity is reasonable, but most species are present at low frequency. Herbaceous species include Common Vetch (*Vicia sativa*), Tufted Vetch (*Vicia cracca*), Meadow Vetchling (*Lathyrus pratensis*), Wild Carrot (*Daucus carota*), Oxeye Daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*) and Weld (*Reseda luteum*). The Essex Red List Pale Flax (*Linum bienne*) is locally frequent and the Nationally Scarce Sea Clover (*Trifolium squamosum*) is restricted to areas of more open sward.

The northern section is heavily grazed by horses and areas of parched short sward retain scattered tussocks of Sea Barley (*Hordeum marinum*) and stands of Dittander (*Lepidium latifolium*), both Nationally Scarce. Several annual clovers are present in these patches, including Sea Clover. Much of the grassland, however, is a rather thin sward of common grasses and herbs, including Red Fescue, Common Bird's-foot-trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), Fern-grass (*Catapodium rigidum*), Weld, Slender Thistle (*Carduus tenuiflorus*), Hoary Cress (*Hirschfeldia incana*) and some Hop Trefoil (*Trifolium campestre*).

Swamp fringed ponds occur in the lower margins of both sections with stands of Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) and Sea Club-rush (*Bolboschoenus maritimus*) alongside Lesser Bulrush (*Typha angustifolia*).

A strip of unmanaged grazing marsh to the north of the landfill is dominated by Sea Couch, Common Couch and False Oat-grass, but supports a reasonable diversity of other grasses and herbaceous species including Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*), Meadow Foxtail, Red Fescue, Saltmarsh Rush (*Juncus gerardii*), Lady's bedstraw (*Galium verum*), Common Vetch, Smooth Tare (*Vicia tetrasperma*), Hoary Ragwort (*Senecio erucifolius*), Goat's-beard (*Tragopogon pratensis*) and Red Clover.

Site Selection Rationale

Although the habitats and species present do not meet the requirements of any individual selection criteria, the quality of the grassland and the small areas of reedbed are considered to be near misses and so the HC28 Small-component Mosaics habitat has been used. This is further justified by the position of the site in relation to the adjacent nationally and internationally designated sites.

None of the populations of noteworthy plant species present is considered to be significant enough to justify the SC1 Vascular Plants criterion.

Priority Habitats (Habitats of Principal Importance in England)

Reedbeds

Ownership and Access

The ownership of the site is unknown. The northern section is fenced with no public access. A public footpath crosses the southern section linking giving permissible access to a network of mown paths and to the seawall footpath, from which the northern section can be viewed.

Management Issues

The lack of active management in the southern section is to the detriment of the grassland's condition and the population sizes of the Nationally Scarce plant species. Current grazing pressure in the northern section may be sufficient to maintain the interest features in heavily grazed areas, but the abundance of Goat's-rue (*Galega officinalis*) is of concern. There is a range of other non-native species present including Spanish Bluebell (*Endymion hispanicus*).

Condition Statement
Moderate, stable
Review Schedule
Site selected: October 2007 Site Reviewed: July 2017, former grazing marsh area to north added

Rochford Local Wildlife Site Description

Site reference: R38

Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TQ 954878

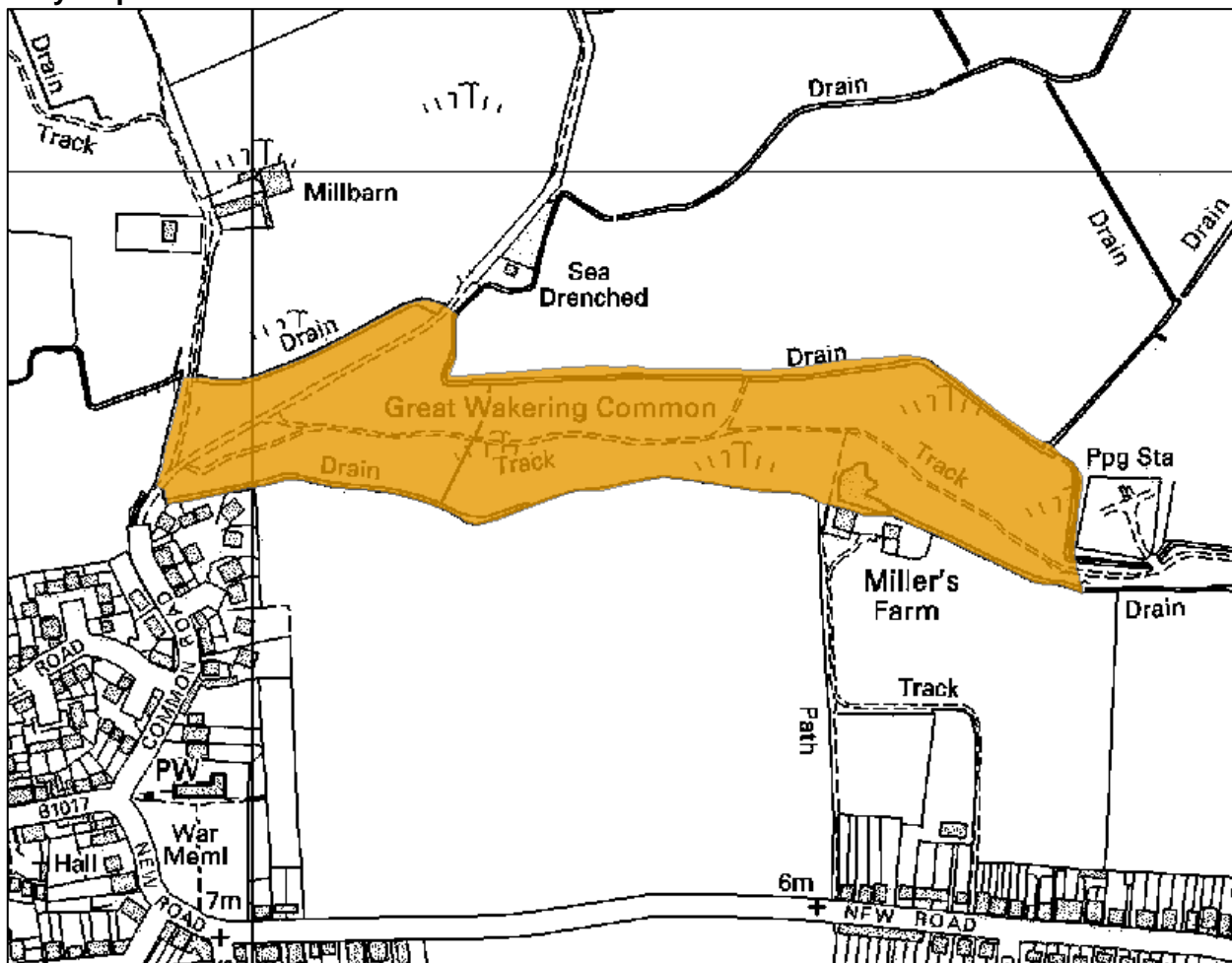
Site name: Great Waking Common, Great Waking

Site area: 6.4.ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC11 – Other Neutral Grasslands
- HC28 – Small-component Mosaics
- SC1 – Vascular Plants

Boundary Map



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Site Description

Great Waking Common is a linear site on the historic edge of coastal grazing marsh in the area and includes coastal grassland, scrub, planted woodland and ponds.

The majority of the grassland is coarse and dominated by Tall Fescue (*Festuca gigantea*) with Yorkshire-fog (*Holcus lanatus*), Cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*) and False Oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*). Restricted areas are more diverse, especially along the edges of mown paths where there is Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*), Grass Vetchling (*Lathyrus nissolia*), Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), Common Bird's-foot-trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), Smooth Tare (*Vicia tetrasperma*), Meadow Buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*), Meadow Barley (*Hordeum secalinum*) and Lady's Bedstraw (*Galium verum*) with significant stands of the Essex Red List Pale Flax (*Linum bienne*) and a smaller quantity of the Essex Red List Yellow Vetchling (*Lathyrus aphaca*).

Lower-lying, damp areas include small stands of the Nationally Scarce Divided Sedge (*Carex divisa*) alongside Marsh Foxtail (*Alopecurus geniculatus*).

Millers Pond contains a significant quantity of the Essex Red Listed Pink Water Speedwell (*Veronica catenata*) alongside Mare's-tail (*Hippuris vulgaris*), Sea Club-rush (*Bolboschoenus maritimus*), Amphibious Bistort (*Polygonum amphibium*), Water-cress (*Nasturtium officinale*) and a water-crowfoot (*Ranunculus* sp.).

Smooth and Great Crested Newts, Common Toad and Common Frog have all been recorded in the pond, but no information is available about their current populations. Water Vole, Grass Snake and Scarce Emerald Damselfly are also present on the pond.

Scrub and planted trees, although unremarkable, add structural diversity to the site and the northern boundary ditch contains stands of Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*).

Site Selection Rationale

The grassland on this site does not represent a lowland meadow community, but is unimproved and demonstrably old, allowing the use of the HC11 Other Neutral Grasslands criterion. Criterion HC28 Small-component Mosaics is used to define the extent of the site, taking in the scrub and planted woodland areas, which would not qualify in their own right.

The SC1 Vascular Plants criterion is included on the strength of the population of Pale Flax, which is well distributed.

Priority Habitats (Habitats of Principal Importance in England)

None

Ownership and Access

The site is privately owned, but leased to the Friends of Wakering Common, a charity. The site is open to access on foot.

Management Issues

Appropriate grassland management, spring and late autumn cutting, is critical to the condition of the site. The site has previously suffered from inappropriate management, including the planting of a significant number of trees on grassland habitat.

Condition Statement

Poor to moderate, stable

Review Schedule

Site selected: 1993

Site Reviewed: 2007, area planted with trees removed
2017, planted area re-added

Rochford Local Wildlife Site Description

Site reference: R39

Site name: Wallasea Island, Canewdon

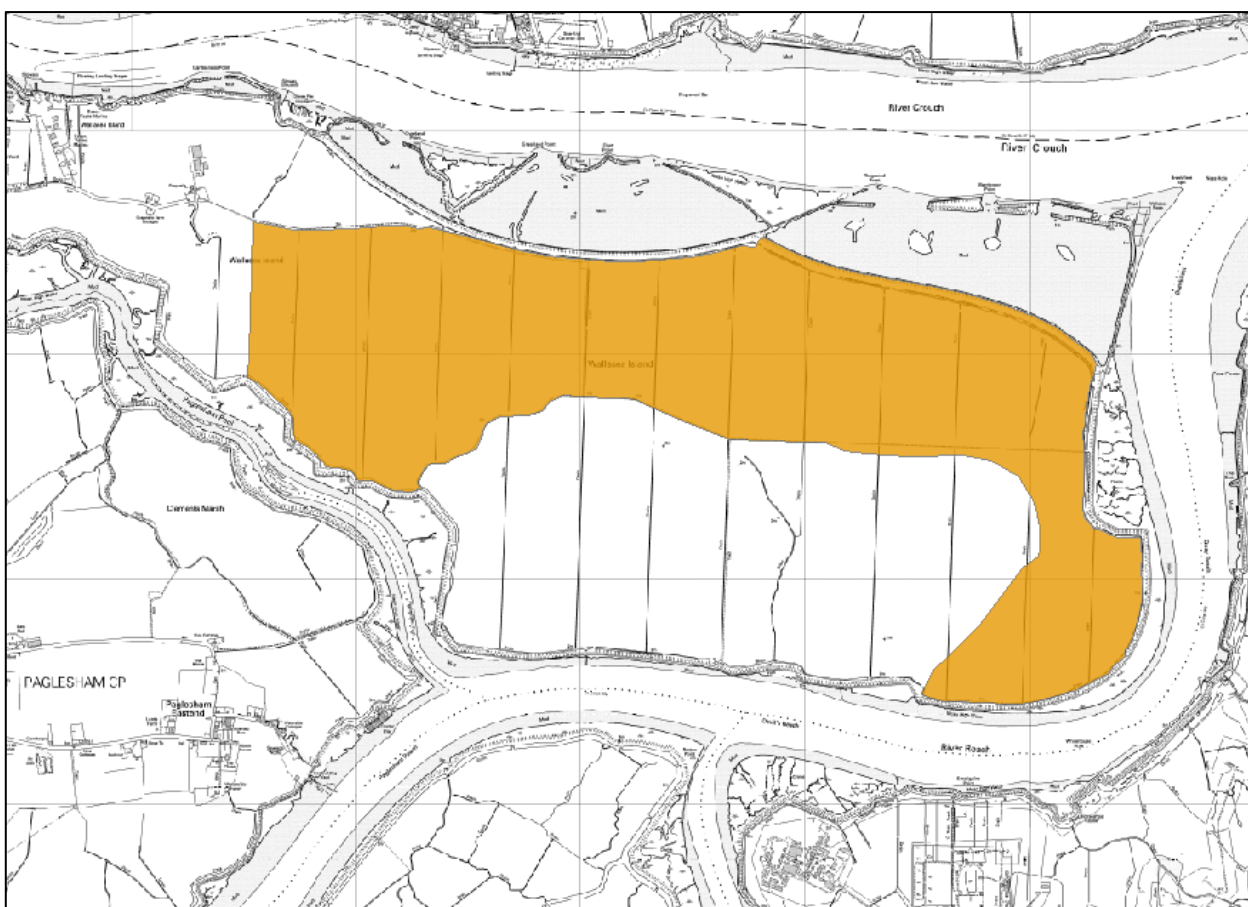
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TQ966941

Site area: 357.5 ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC11 – Other Neutral Grassland
- HC23 – Saltmarsh and Mudflats
- SC5 – Notable Bird Species
- SC12 – Breeding Water Vole Colonies
- SC16 – Hotspots for Reptile Diversity
- SC18 – Invertebrates listed as Species of Principal Importance in England

Boundary Map



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Site Description

This site is made up of wetland and grassland habitats created in 2015-16 as part of a much larger habitat creation project that is still underway.

The former arable fields of the island have been extensively engineered to create a series of wetlands of differing characters. At the eastern end of the island is Jubilee Marsh, fully tidal, but designed to retain seawater in a series of lagoons. To the west is Pool Marsh, a lagoon that can be flooded with seawater through a sluice structure, with large grassy islands.

West of Pool Marsh is Acres Fleet Lagoons, Grass Farm Pool and Marsh Flats, areas of seeded grassland with a series of small and large lagoons with islands for breeding waders, and wet low-ways and channels, both saline and freshwater. The establishing grassland here currently consists of Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*), Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*), Meadow Foxtail (*Alopecurus pratensis*) and Creeping Bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*) with legumes such as Common Bird's-foot-trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), Smooth Tare

(*Vicia tetrasperma*), Grass Vetchling (*Lathyrus nissolia*) and Red Clover (*Trifolium pratense*).

To the north of Marsh Flats is an area of rough grassland used as a receptor site for all four species of Essex reptiles displaced from other parts of the island. To the south of Marsh Flats is an area of Water Vole mitigation habitat.

Inside the northern seawall, the new borrowdyke supports stands of Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) and Sea Club-rush (*Bolboschoenus maritimus*), with breeding Little Grebe, Coot and Moorhen. The Nationally Scarce Sea Clover (*Trifolium squamosum*) is found on the seawall folding where the sward is more open.

The site already supports a range of significant breeding bird species including Avocet, Redshank, Lapwing, Skylark, Yellow Wagtail, Corn Bunting, Black-headed Gull, Common Tern and Little Ringed Plover. The site also attracts significant numbers of water birds over winter, supporting the adjacent network of internationally designated coastal sites.

Other species populations of note includes Brown Hare, Black Oil Beetle (*Meloe proscarabeus*), Shrill Carder Bee (*Bombus sylvarum*), Moss Carder Bee (*Bombus muscorum*) and Brown-banded Carder Bee (*Bombus humilis*), all of which are Priority Species.

Site Selection Rationale

Parts of the site are still establishing and it is likely that details of habitats and their relative importance will change over time, which means that this rationale should be considered provisional. The justification for selecting the site as a LoWS is clear when considered as a whole, but applying individual criteria is more complicated due to the unique nature of the project.

Inter-tidal areas can be adequately covered by the HC23 Saltmarsh and Mudflats, with evidence to show that even the most newly created areas are being used by coastal wildlife. The HC11 Other Neutral Grassland criterion has been used to include the majority of terrestrial habitats across the site, as although these grasslands are newly created, their nature conservation value and contribution to the ecology of the site is demonstrable.

The SC5 Notable Bird Species is applied here primarily for the populations of Avocet, Corn Bunting, Yellow Wagtail and Little Ringed Plover, which are already known to be significant in a county context. Mitigation work associated with the habitat scheme has demonstrated the presence of populations that justify the SC12 Breeding Water Vole Colonies and SC16 Hotspots for Reptile Diversity criteria focussed on specially created habitat, but certain to spread to other suitable areas. The SC18 Invertebrates listed as Species of Principal Importance in England is applied due to the known populations of Black Oil Beetle and the three Priority carder bees.

Priority Habitats (Habitats of Principal Importance in England)

Coastal Saltmarsh
Intertidal mudflats

Ownership and Access

The site is managed by RSPB in partnership with Natural England and Defra. Three separate nature trails allow access around the site from a dedicated car park.

Condition Statement

Good, improving

Management Issues

Construction work on the island continues and it will be some time before all of the newly created habitats reach a stable condition.

Review Schedule

Site selected: October 2007

Site Reviewed: July 2017, extended to include newly created habitats

Rochford Local Wildlife Site Description

Site reference: R40

Site name: Cherry Orchard Country Park, Eastwood

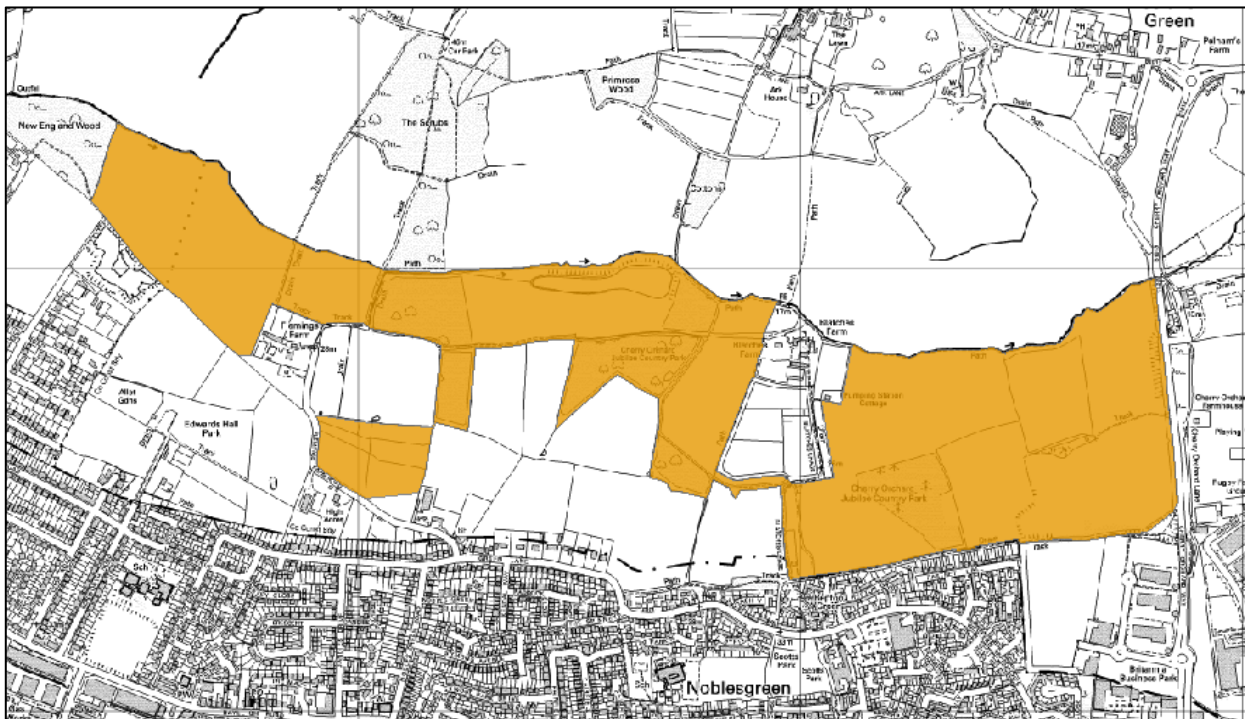
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TQ842898

Site area: 82.8ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC31 Accessible Greenspace

Boundary Map



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Site Description

This extensive country park, created in the early 2000s from farmland, is made up of a series of meadows, interspersed with planted broad-leaved woodland, old hedgerows and a lake, with the Rover Roach forming the northern boundary. The site connects R10 New England Wood, R13 Edwards Hall Park and R18 The Scrubs and provides countryside access to a large local population.

The meadows are improved and species poor, dominated by Perennial Rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*) and White Clover (*Trifolium repens*). The planted woodlands vary in age, but the younger, more open ones are flower rich in gaps and around margins, supporting Common Fleabane (*Pulicaria dysenterica*), Wild Carrot (*Daucus carota*), Red Bartsia (*Odontites vernus*), Hoary Ragwort (*Senecio erucifolius*) and Red Clover (*Trifolium pratense*).

The old hedgerows contain a significant number of large Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) trees as well as some old Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), but they are not species rich and only a few have interesting ground flora species such as Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*) and False-brome (*Brachypodium sylvaticum*). Some are likely to qualify as the Hedgerow Habitat of Principal Importance in England.

The River Roach is lined with White Willows (*Salix alba*), with some Pedunculate Oak, Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) and Ash trees, Blackthorn (*Prunus spinose*) and Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogynya*) scrub. It is largely enclosed and shaded with dense Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), Common Nettle (*Urtica dioica*) and Great Willowherb (*Epilobium hirsutum*) covering the steep banks.

The lake is recent in origin and subject to human disturbance, but the fenced off western end supports marginal vegetation of Soft-rush (*Juncus effuses*), Great Willowherb, Bulrush (*Typha latifolia*), Yellow Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*) and scattered willow (*Salix* sp.) bushes.

Site Selection Rationale

Although the site's habitats are of value to wildlife within a local landscape context, there are no areas that can be considered to be of wider conservation value and there is no evidence of significant populations of important species. However, the proximity of accessible countryside to the large urban population of Rayleigh and Southend is of considerable importance, justifying the HC31 Accessible Greenspace criterion.

Priority Habitats (Habitats of Principal Importance in England)

Hedgerows

Ownership and Access

The site is owned and managed by Rochford District Council with open access via a number of entrances.

Condition Statement

Good, declining

Management Issues

The meadows are not being managed in a wildlife friendly manner, hay cutting being disastrous to invertebrate populations and unlikely to result in flower-rich grassland in this location. The younger planted woodlands will provide diversity while they remain open, but their canopies will soon close, as has happened with the older plots.

Review Schedule

Site selected: July 2017

Site Reviewed: -

Rochford Local Wildlife Site Description

Site reference: R41 (Pulpits Farm)

Site name: Round Hill Pastures, Ashingdon

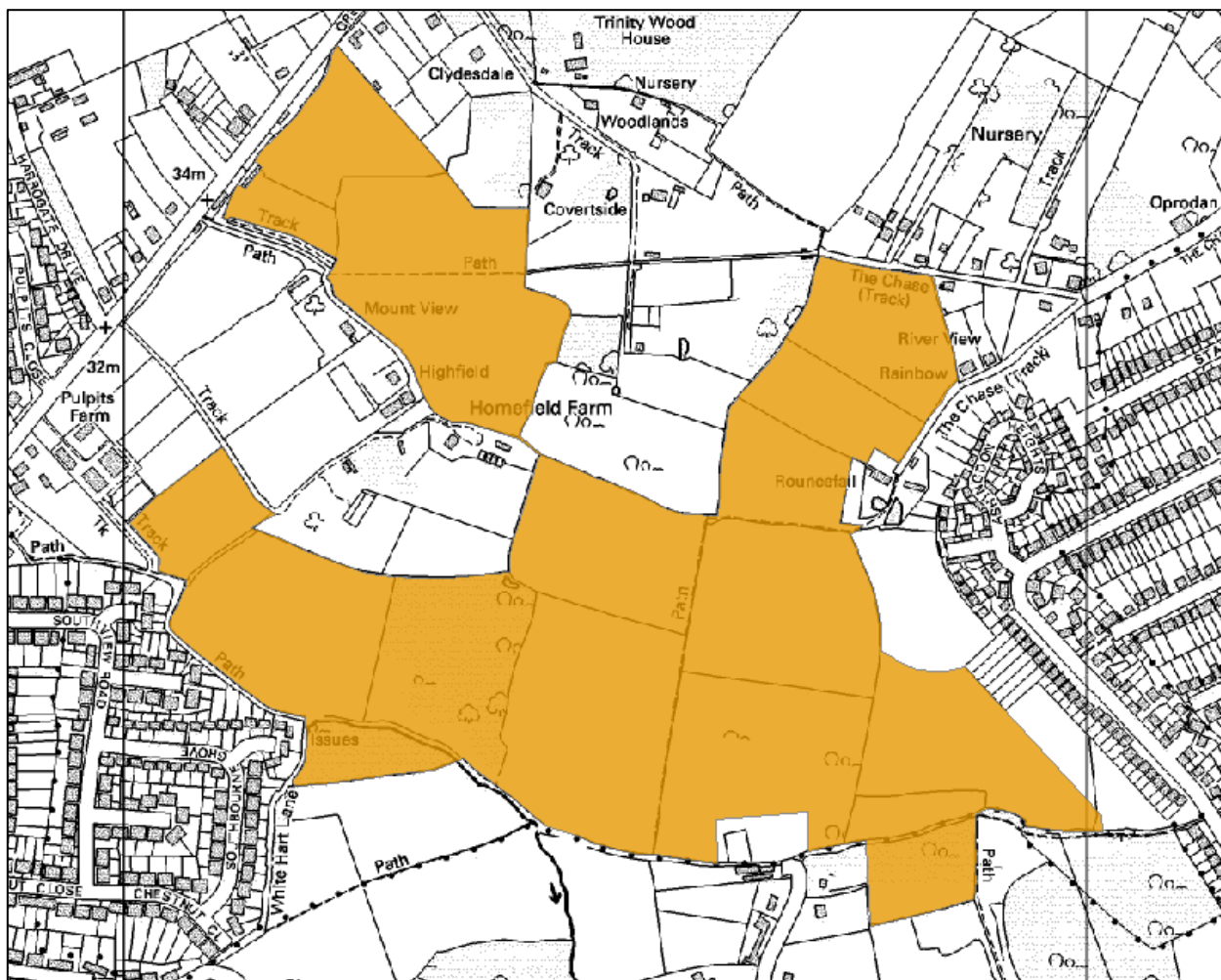
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TQ849932

Site area: 35.0 ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC2 – Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites
- HC9 – Lowland Meadows

Boundary Map



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Site Description

This series of pastures support a good diversity of grasses and herbaceous species, with some key indicators suggesting that they may not have been agriculturally improved. In places, the sward has affinities with acid grassland communities.

Grasses include Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*), Common Bent (*Agrostis capillaris*), Yellow Oat-grass (*Trisetum flavescens*), Meadow Foxtail (*Alopecurus pratensis*), Sweet Vernal Grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*) and Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*).

Herbaceous species include Field Scabious (*Knautia arvensis*), Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), Beaked Hawk's-beard (*Crepis vesicaria*), Common Bird's-foot-trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), Meadow Buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*), Grass Vetchling (*Lathyrus nissolia*), Meadow Vetchling (*Lathyrus pratensis*), Smooth Tare (*Vicia tetrasperma*), Common Sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*), Sheep's Sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*) and Red Bartsia (*Odontites vernus*), Agrimony (*Agrimonia eupatoria*), Field Wood-rush (*Luzula campestris*), Lesser Stitchwort (*Stellaria graminea*). The Essex Red List Pale Flax (*Linum bienne*) is present in some places.

Some of the boundary hedges are clearly old, with good numbers of Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) coppice stools, pollards and standards. Ground flora includes Hart's-tongue (*Asplenium scorodonia*), Remote Sedge (*Carex remota*), Wood Sedge (*Carex sylvatica*) and Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*).

The site also includes some areas of secondary woodland comprising Pedunculate Oak and Ash standards with an understorey predominantly made up of Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*).

Site Selection Rationale

Although not all of the fields are managed in a favourable manner, the grassland type matches the National Vegetation Classification MG5 hay meadow community qualifying it as Lowland Meadow Priority Habitat and allowing the use of the HC9 Lowland Meadows criterion. Structurally mature areas of secondary woodland meet the requirements of the HC2 Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites criterion.

Priority Habitats (Habitats of Principal Importance in England)

Lowland Meadows

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Ownership and Access

Ownership of the pastures and other habitat blocks is unknown, but they are all believed to be private. The site is crossed by a series of public footpaths linking Ashingdon to Hockley.

Condition Statement

Good, stable

Management Issues

The pastures are managed by horse-grazing and hay cut, which is maintaining the quality of the sward, but isn't ideal to maximise diversity or floristic abundance.

Review Schedule

Site selected: July 2017, new sections added to part of existing R24 Magnolia Nature Reserve and Fields

Site Reviewed: -

Rochford Local Wildlife Site Description

Site reference: R42 (Highsteppers)

Site name: Ashingdon Pastures, Ashingdon

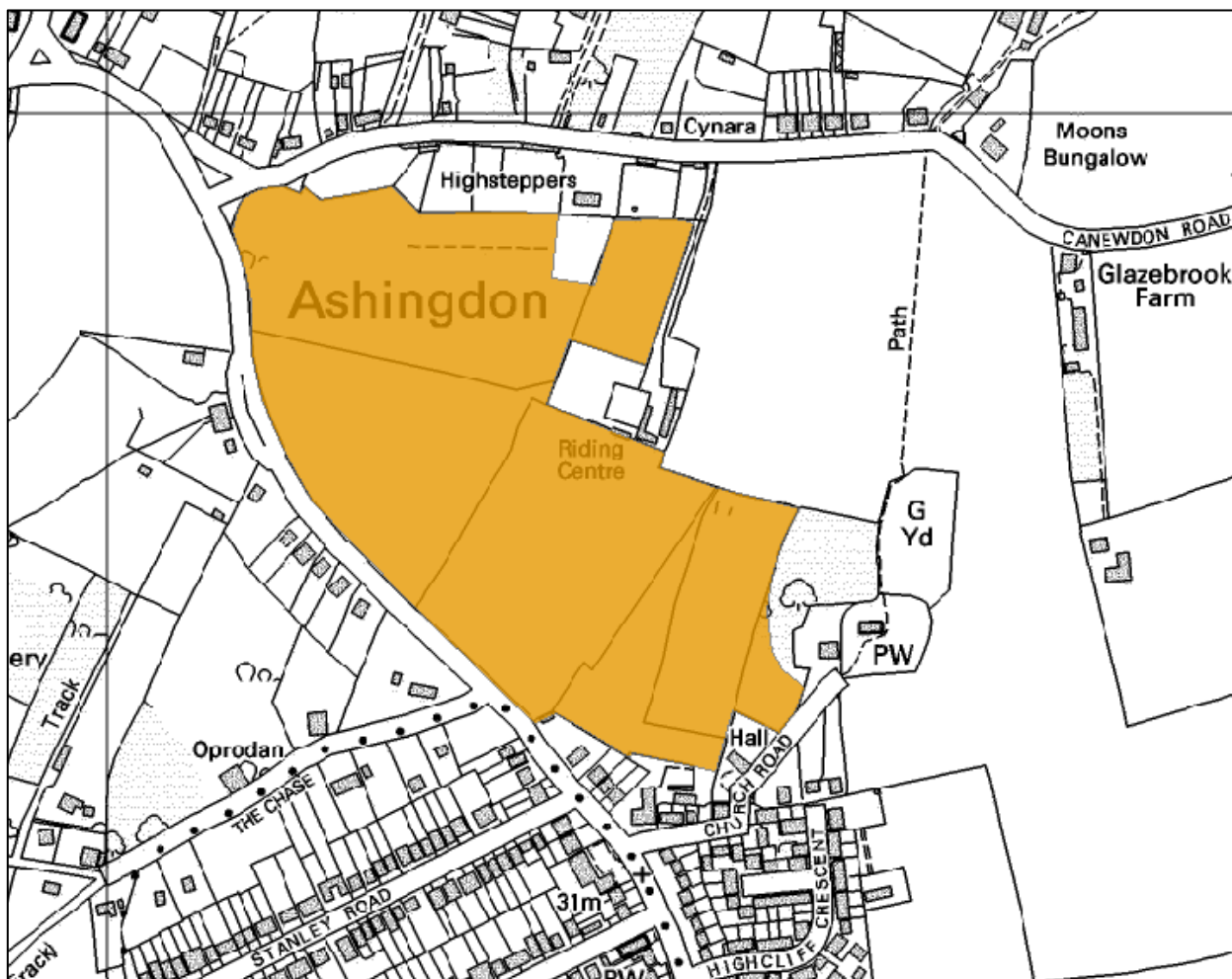
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TQ863938

Site area: 11.7 ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC11 Other Neutral Grassland

Boundary Map



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Site Description

This collection of flower-rich, horse-grazed pastures beneath St Andrews Church appears to be substantially unimproved, with visible stetch (a form of ridge and furrow) patterning in some areas providing evidence of a lack of mechanised cultivation.

The majority of the site has been grazed with horses at low intensity, in recent years at least, with varying amounts of scattered scrub. Grass species include Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*), Meadow Barley (*Hordeum secalinum*), Common Bent (*Agrostis tenuis*), Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*), cat's-tails (*Phleum* sp.) and Meadow Foxtail (*Alopecurus pratensis*). Noteworthy herbaceous species include Agrimony (*Agrimonia eupatoria*), Meadow Vetchling (*Lathyrus pratensis*), Common Bird's-foot-trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), Hoary Plantain (*Plantago media*), Red Bartsia (*Odontites vernus*), Oxeye Daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*), Common Fleabane (*Pulicaria dysenterica*) and Strawberry Clover (*Trifolium fragiferum*), of which there is also a large colony on the adjacent verge of Ashingdon Road.

Within the field boundaries, there are a number of large Pedunculate Oaks (*Quercus robur*), including some that are providing a significant dead wood resource.

Although no data is available, features of the site suggest that it could support a notable assemblage of invertebrates.

Site Selection Rationale

The site appears to support unimproved grassland, although there is insufficient evidence to justify the use of the HC9 Lowland Meadows criterion. The sward is diverse and there is evidence to support a long continuity of grassland cover.

Priority Habitats (Habitats of Principal Importance in England)

None, although further survey data might prove the presence of grassland qualifying as Lowland Meadows.

Ownership and Access

Ownership is unknown, but the site is believed to be private. The site can be viewed from the adjacent public highway and overlooked from St Andrews church.

Condition Statement

Good

Management Issues

The site is not currently subject to conservation management. Parts have been subject to scrub invasion, which threatens to reduce the area of open grassland to the detriment of the site's known value. However, some level of scattered scrub is beneficial to overall biodiversity and may be important to the site's as yet unknown invertebrate assemblage.

Review Schedule

Site selected: July 2017

Site Reviewed: -

Rochford Local Wildlife Site Description

Site reference: R43 (Formerly W29)

Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TQ885937

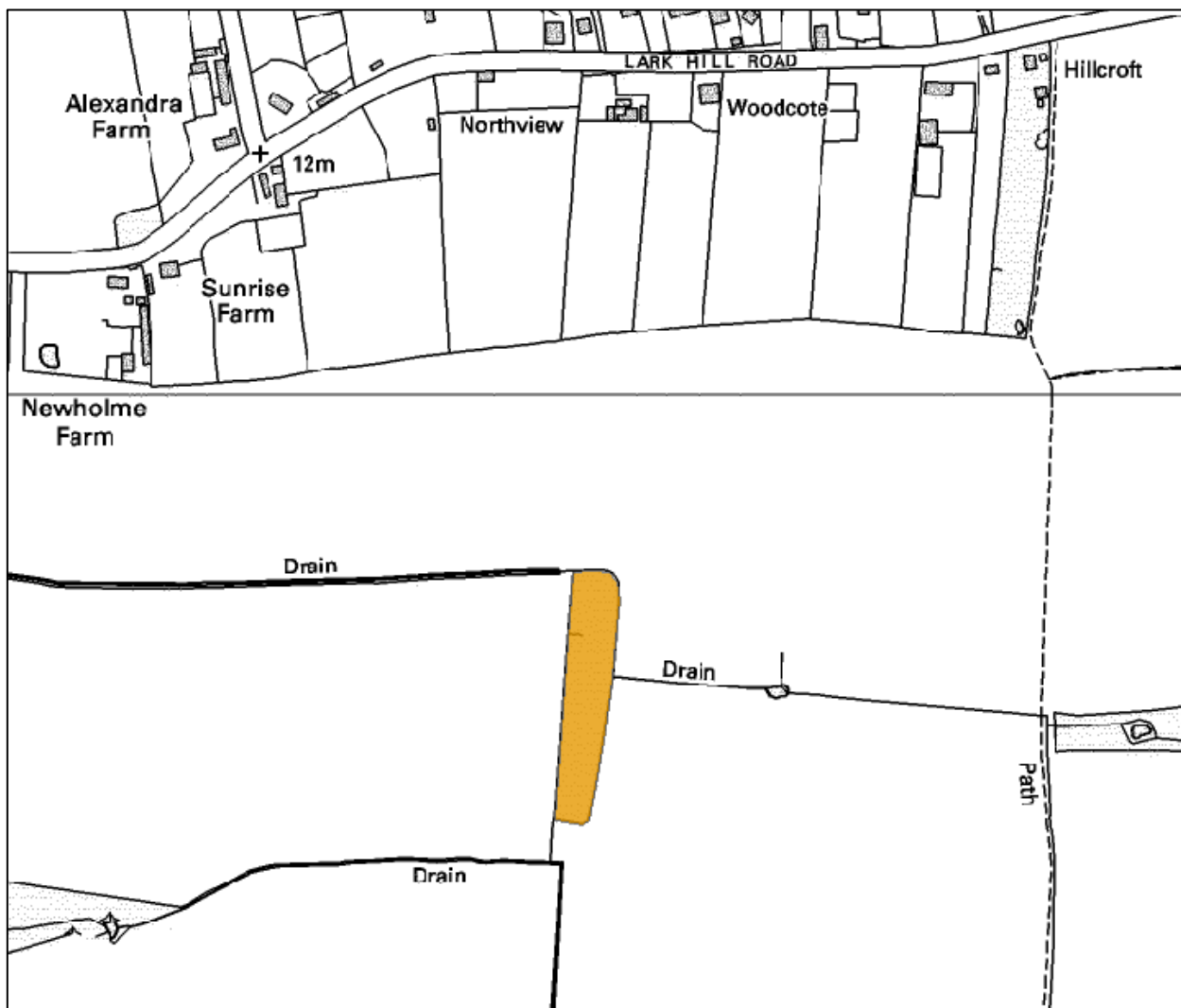
Site name: Buller's Grove, Canewdon

Site area: 0.7 ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC2 – Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites

Boundary Map



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Site Description

This woodland dates from the 19th Century and is likely to have established naturally from old hedgerows on its boundaries.

The canopy consists of Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) and mature, coppiced Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) with two large, dead oak pollards at the northern end providing a substantial dead resource. The understorey consists of Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), elm (*Ulmus* sp.), Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) and Elder (*Sambucus nigra*).

The ground flora is typical of secondary woodland, including False-brome (*Brachypodium sylvaticum*), Red Campion (*Silene dioica*), Herb-robert (*Geranium robertianum*), Wood Avens (*Geum urbanum*), Wood Meadow-grass (*Poa nemoralis*) and Ground Ivy (*Glechoma hederacea*). Of particular note is the presence of Spurge Laurel (*Daphne laureola*), a locally scarce plant which is associated with old hedgerows and open woodland.

Site Selection Rationale

Although map evidence demonstrates that this isn't ancient woodland, it is established secondary woodland with a good structure and reasonable species diversity. It lies within a part of the district with very little woodland cover and so makes a significant contribution to biodiversity in the landscape.

Priority Habitats (Habitats of Principal Importance in England)

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Ownership and Access

Ownership is unknown, but the site is believed to be private and there is no public access.

Condition Statement

Good, stable

Management Issues

There does not appear to be any evidence of recent conservation management, although it is estimated that Ash was coppiced about 30 years ago. The remnants of a Pheasant pen demonstrate previous management issues.

Review Schedule

Site selected: 1993, reselected in July 2017

Site Reviewed: Deleted in 2007 because of a lack of data

Rochford Local Wildlife Site Description

Site reference: R44 (Formerly W31)

Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TQ906918

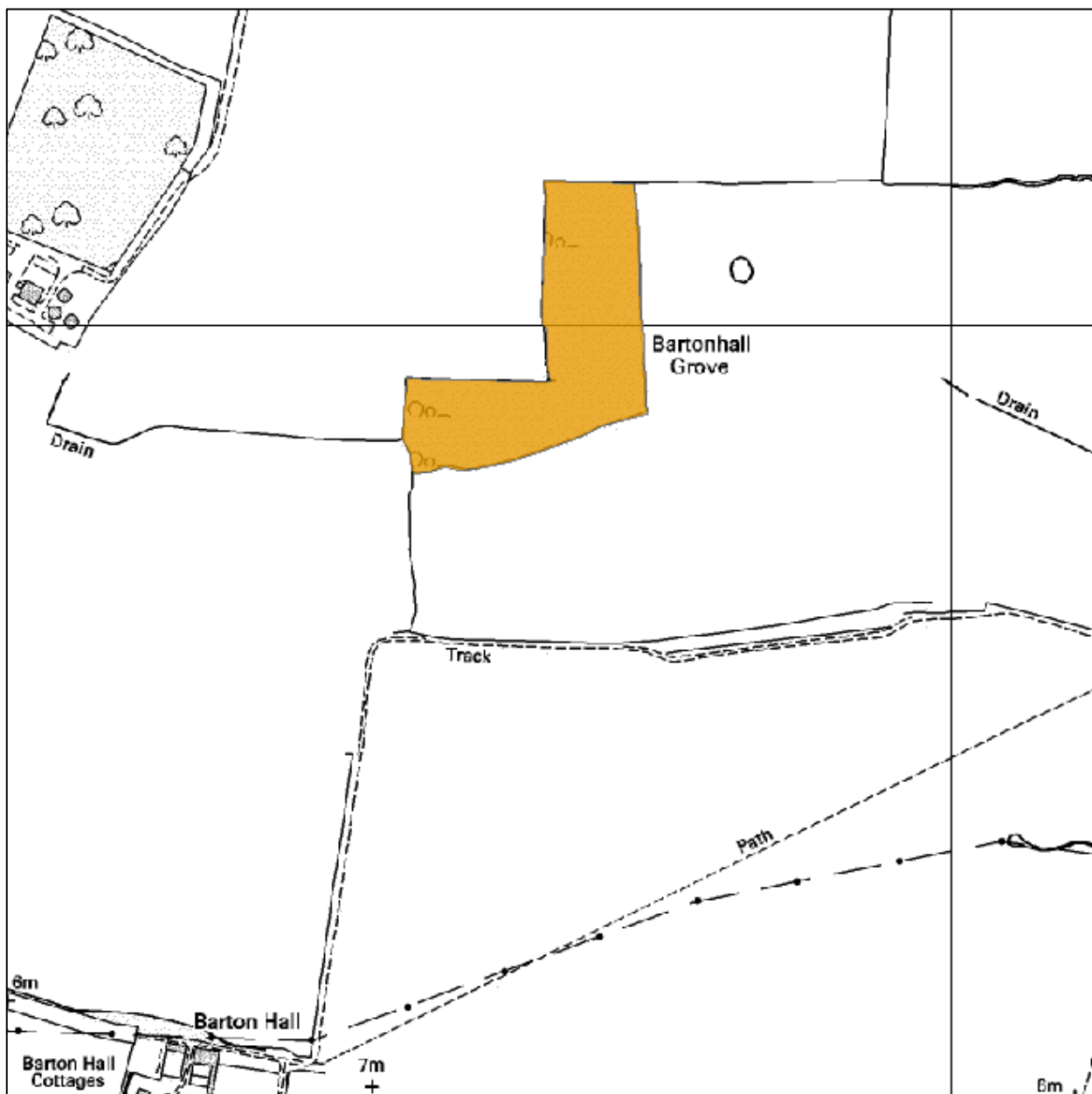
Site name: Bartonhall Grove, Stambridge

Site area: 3.3 ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC2 – Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites

Boundary Map



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Site Description

This old, secondary woodland is situated in an area of the district with little woodland cover and supports a significant amount of dead wood, standing and fallen.

The canopy consists of Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) and coppiced Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), with some planted cypress (*Cupressaceae*). The understorey includes elm (*Ulmus*), Field Maple (*Acer campestre*), Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*).

The ground flora is typical of secondary woodland with Cow Parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*), False-brome (*Brachypodium sylvaticum*), Red Campion (*Silene dioica*), Ground Ivy (*Glechoma hederacea*) and Common

Nettle (*Urtica dioica*). More open areas are dominated by Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), False Oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*) and Common Nettle.

Site Selection Rationale

The site is clearly not ancient, but is well-established secondary woodland comprising predominantly native species with a good structure. It lies within a part of the district with very little woodland cover and so makes a significant contribution to biodiversity in the landscape.

Priority Habitats (Habitats of Principal Importance in England)

Lowland mixed deciduous woodland

Ownership and Access

Ownership is unknown, but the site is believed to be private. There is no public access, but the site can be viewed from the Roach Valley Way to the south

Condition Statement

Good, stable

Management Issues

The Ash within the woodland was coppiced a long time ago and some Ash has been planted more recently, but there is no evidence of very active management in the last few years. The site would benefit from the re-establishment of coppicing and more diversity in the understorey.

Review Schedule

Site selected: 1993, re-selected in June 2017

Site Reviewed: Deleted in 2007

Rochford Local Wildlife Site Description

Site reference: R45

Site name: Bartonhall Creek Seawall, Stambridge

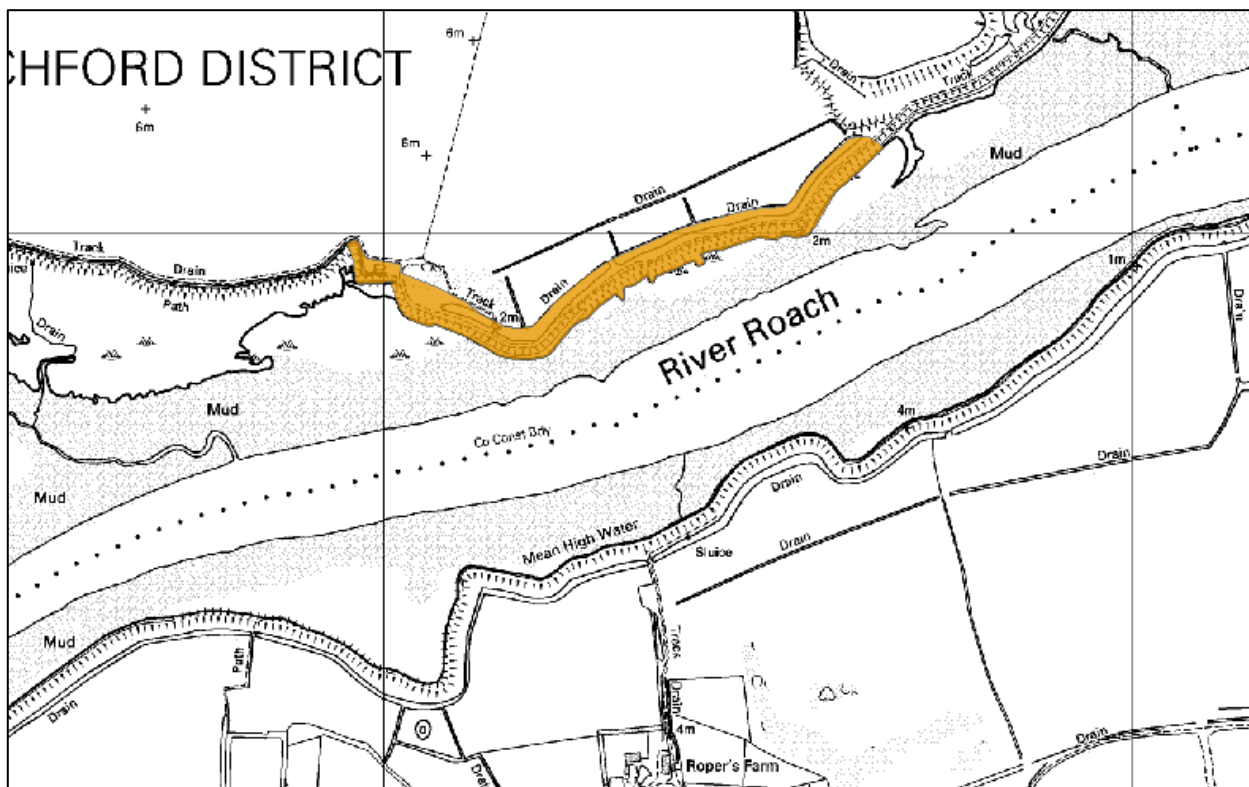
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TQ923909

Site area: 3.5 ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC11 Other Neutral Grassland
- SC1 Vascular Plants

Boundary Map



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Site Description

This short section of seawall supports a typical coastal grassland community with reasonable diversity and some locally noteworthy plant species. It lies adjacent to the Roach estuary, to the west of Paglesham Lagoon and augments these SSSI habitats.

The bank of the seawall is largely dominated by Common Couch (*Elytrigia repens*), with some Crow Garlic (*Allium vineale*), Sheep's Sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*) and Common Bent (*Agrostis capillaris*), but the folding is more diverse, with patches of Common Bird's-foot-trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), Creeping Cinquefoil (*Potentilla repens*), Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*) and Prickly Sedge (*Carex muricata*). It also supports a large population of the Essex Red Data List Hairy Vetchling (*Lathyrus hirsutus*). At the western end of the site is a small area of very diverse, unimproved grassland supporting Yellow Rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*), Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), Field Scabious (*Knautia arvensis*), Hoary Plantain (*Plantago media*), Lady's Bedstraw (*Galium verum*) and Cowslip (*Primula veris*).

The broad borrowdyke is fringed with saltmarsh plants such as Common Sea Lavender (*Limonium vulgare*), Sea Purslane (*Atriplex portulacoides*), Annual Sea-blite (*Suaeda maritima*), Saltmarsh Rush (*Juncus gerardii*), glasswort (*Salicornia / Sarcocornia spp.*) and the Nationally Scarce Golden Samphire (*Inula crithmoides*). The site also includes a narrow fringe of upper saltmarsh on the seaward side of the seawall that isn't within the SSSI, dominated by Sea Couch (*Elytrigia atherica*).

Adder and Water Vole are both present and the site and its surroundings also support the locally significant Marbled White butterfly and Species of Principal Importance in England bird species such as Corn Bunting,

Yellow Wagtail and Reed Bunting.

Site Selection Rationale

Although not consistent with the National Vegetation Classification MG5 community, the grassland on this section of seawall is unimproved and sufficiently diverse to stand out within the local landscape, justifying the use of the HC11 - Other Neutral Grassland criterion.

The presence of a significant population of the Essex Red Data List Hairy Vetchling, away from its stronghold at Hadleigh, justifies the inclusion of the SC1 Vascular Plants criterion.

Priority Habitats (Habitats of Principal Importance in England)

None

Ownership and Access

The site is likely to be in private ownership, although responsibility for management and maintenance lies with the Environment Agency. There is a public footpath along the seawall, accessible from Great Stambridge and Paglesham.

Condition Statement

Good

Management Issues

The folding had been cut midsummer, which is not ideal for the plant species present or for invertebrate populations, but regular cutting is required to maintain the diversity of the grassland present. A rotational late autumn cut would be preferable.

Review Schedule

Site selected: July 2017

Site Reviewed: -

Rochford Local Wildlife Site Description

Site reference: R46

Site name: Stannets Creek, Paglesham

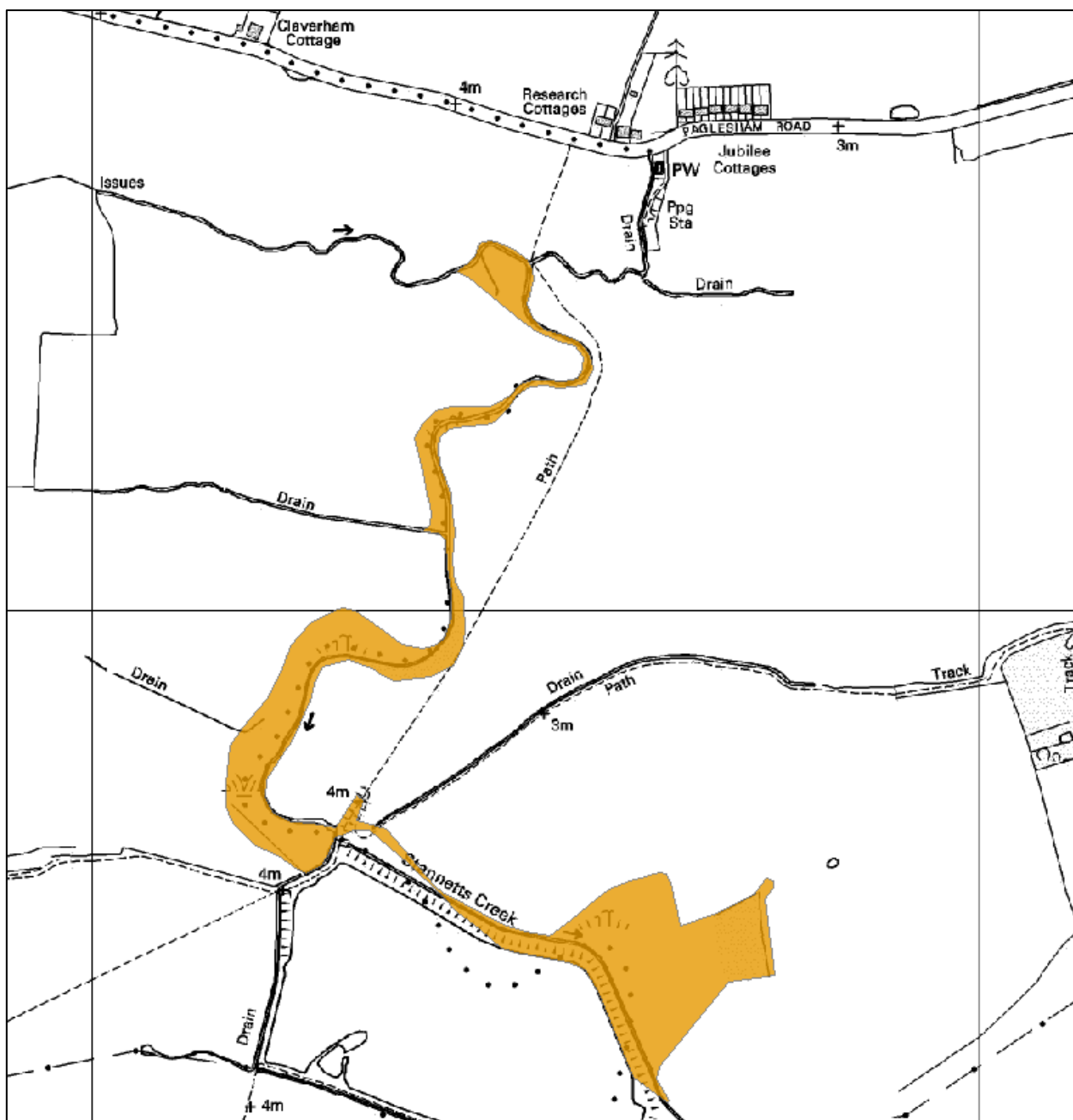
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TQ923919

Site area: 7.0 ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC15 – Reedbeds
- HC23 – Saltmarsh and Mudflats
- HC28 – Small-component Mosaics

Boundary Map



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Site Description

This site is largely made up of a formerly tidal creek, cut off from the estuary in the early 20th Century, with adjacent fragments of coastal habitats that fall outside of the Crouch and Roach Estuaries Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

The main channel, heading north from Paglesham Lagoon, is dominated by Common Reed (*Phragmites*

australis) with some Sea Club-rush (*Bolboschoenus maritimus*). The channel has fringing willows (*Salix* sp.) with associated Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) and Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) scrub on its banks. More open parts of the banks support rough grassland with Great Lettuce (*Lactuca virosa*), Hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*), Great Willowherb (*Epilobium hirsutum*), Common Nettle (*Urtica dioica*) and Creeping Thistle (*Cirsium arvense*).

To the east of Paglesham Lagoon, outside of the SSSI boundary, there is some flower-rich grassland on the lagoon banks that includes species such as Meadow Barley (*Hordeum secalinum*), Grass Vetchling (*Lathyrus nissolia*), Common Bird's-foot-trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*) and Hairy Tare (*Vicia hirsuta*).

To the east is an area of rough grassland that conforms to an upper saltmarsh community, dominated by Sea Couch-grass (*Elytrigia atherica*), with Sea Club-rush and Common Reed at low points. Adjacent to this area is an area of scrub and secondary woodland that significantly contributes to the diversity of the landscape, especially given the scarcity of these habitats in the coastal landscape in this part of the district.

Little Egrets breed in the woodland and Reed Bunting, Reed Warbler and Common Whitethroat all breed along the creek.

Site Selection Rationale

The extent of reedbed within the creek is sufficiently significant to justify the use of the HC15 Reedbeds criterion, while the upper saltmarsh area is covered by the HC23 Saltmarsh and Mudflats criterion, as it is subject to some tidal exchange through a sluice in the seawall. Other marginal habitats do not meet any individual habitat criteria, but contribute to a significantly diverse and valuable habitat mosaic, so the HC28 Small-component Mosaics criterion has been used to define the extent of the site.

Priority Habitats (Habitats of Principal Importance in England)

Reedbeds, Saltmarsh

Ownership and Access

The site is believed to be in private ownership. The site can be viewed from a public footpath that runs to the east of the creek, from the Roach Valley Way, which crosses the site on the northern edge of Paglesham Lagoon and from the seawall to the south.

Condition Statement

Good, stable

Management Issues

The land on either side of the creek is in arable cultivation and so it is likely to be subject to nutrient enrichment and spray drift. Succession to scrub is likely in the long term, although at present the balance is acceptable.

Review Schedule

Site selected: June 2017

Site Reviewed: n/a

Rochford Local Wildlife Site Description

Site reference: R47

Site name: Marylands Nature Reserve, Hockley

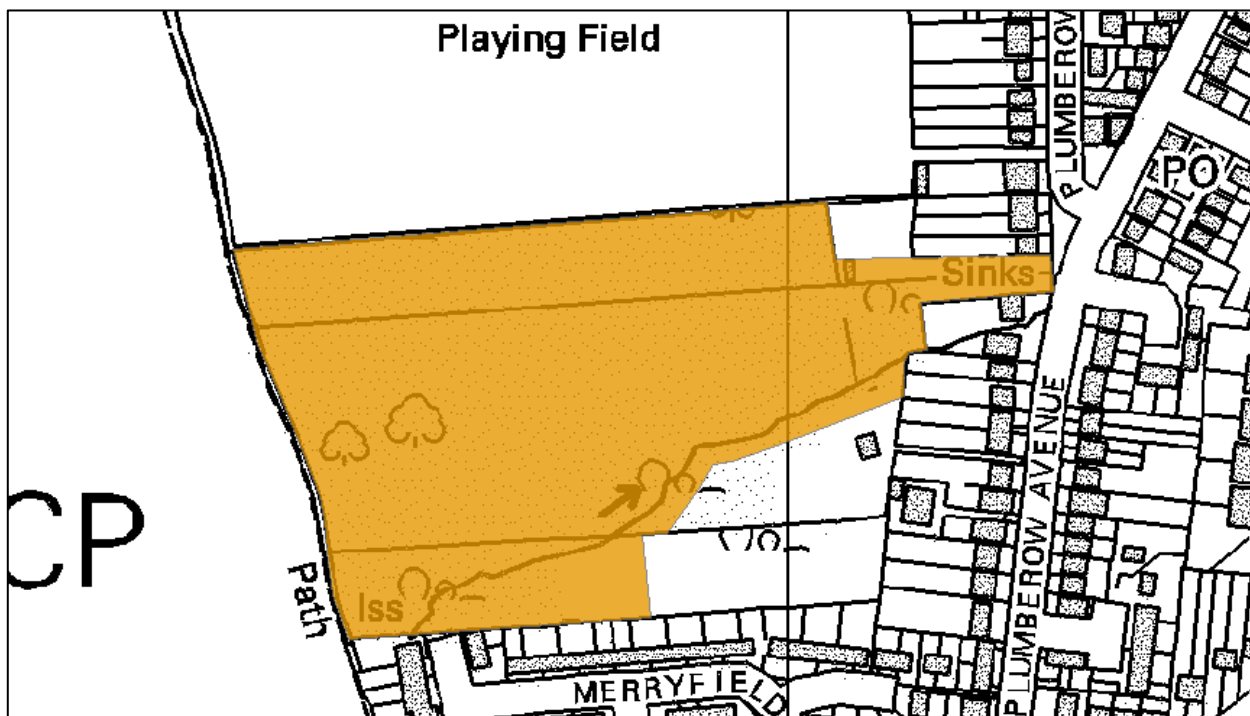
Grid ref. (approx. centre of site): TQ839933

Site area: 4.3 ha

LoWS Selection Criteria:

- HC2 Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites

Boundary Map



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Site Description

This site largely consists of secondary woodland that has established naturally since the 1930s when the first plotland developments were created in the area, but it benefits from the old woodland character of the stream corridor that crosses it.

The canopy consists of Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) with a thick understorey of Bullace (*Prunus domestica*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*), Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) and Elder (*Sambucus nigra*) with some Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*), Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*), Yew (*Taxus baccata*) and Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*).

The ground flora is largely typical of secondary woodland, with species such as Cow Parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*), False-brome (*Brachypodium sylvaticum*), Wood Avens (*Geum urbanum*), Herb Robert (*Geranium robertianum*), Lords-and-Ladies (*Arum maculatum*), Greater Stitchwort (*Stellaria holostea*) and Common Ivy (*Hedera helix*). However, along the stream are found a number of species more typically associated with old or ancient woodland, including Remote Sedge (*Carex remota*), Wood Sedge (*Carex sylvatica*), Enchanter's-nightshade (*Circaea lutetiana*), Wood Millet (*Milium effusum*), Wood Melick (*Melica uniflora*) and Dog's Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*). Hart's-tongue (*Asplenium scorodonia*) and Broad-leaved Helleborine (*Epipactis helleborine*), both of which are uncommon in the county, are also present on the stream banks.

A small meadow within the nature reserve is dominated by coarse grasses such as Yorkshire-fog (*Holcus lanatus*), Cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*) and False Oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*), but there is timothy (*Phleum* sp.), Creeping Bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*) and Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*) present in places, with Meadow Vetchling (*Lathyrus pratensis*), Grass Vetchling (*Lathyrus nissolia*), Meadow Buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*), Wild Carrot (*Daucus carota*), Smooth Tare (*Vicia tetrasperma*), Common Cat's-ear (*Hypochaeris radicata*), Red Bartsia (*Odontites vernus*) and Hairy St. John's-wort (*Hypericum hirsutum*).

Site Selection Rationale

Old maps show that Marylands Nature Reserve was open fields until the 1930s and it was not shown as woodland until 1970, but it has achieved a typical woodland structure and is composed of native species, so it meets the HC2 Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites criterion.

Priority Habitats (Habitats of Principal Importance in England)

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Ownership and Access

The site is owned and managed by Hockley Parish Council as public open space and there is an accessible path providing a circular route through it.

Condition Statement

Good, stable

Management Issues

Some parts of the site would benefit from thinning to allow more light to reach ground level and to encourage the development of a better woodland structure. The meadow is dominated by coarse grasses and is subject to scrub invasion, which could be countered by cutting in spring and autumn.

Review Schedule

Site selected: June 2018

Site Reviewed: n/a

5. Justification for the inclusion or exclusion of sites

5.1 Changes to existing Local Wildlife Sites

The majority of the now 46 LoWSs in the Register for Rochford District are ancient woodland (54%), an irreplaceable habitat. Other habitats designated include grassland (24%), four mosaic sites including gravel pits (9%) and coastal habitats (11%) with Wallasea Island being the largest LoWS in Rochford District at over 350ha (outside of the area now designated as SSSI).

The following list of previously designated LoWS, includes a brief summary of the changes, if any, applied as a result of the current assessment.

Site No	Site Name	Parish	Recommendation
R1	Kingley Wood	Rayleigh	No change
R2	Hullbridge Road Meadow	Hullbridge	No change
R3	Blounts Wood	Rayleigh	Adjacent secondary woodland added
R4	Hockley Woods Complex	Hockley	No change
R5	Grove Woods	Rayleigh	No change
R6	Rawreth Hall Wood	Rayleigh	No change
R7	Brandy Hole Marsh Extension	Hullbridge	SSSI land removed; minor boundary changes
R8	Hockleyhall/Crabtree Woods	Hockley	Adjacent secondary woodland added
R9	Folly Wood	Hockley	No change
R10	New England Wood	Rayleigh	No change
R11	Bett's Wood	Hockley	No change
R12	The Dome Grasslands	Hullbridge	No change
R13	Edwards Hall Park	Rayleigh	No change
R14	Marylands Wood	Hockley	No change
R15	Plumberow Wood	Hockley	No change
R16	Belchamps Camp, Hockley Woods	Hawkwell	Adjacent secondary wood added
R17	Gustedhall Wood	Rochford	Adjacent secondary wood added
R18	The Scrubs	Rochford	No change
R19	Primrose Wood	Rochford	No change
R20	Cottons	Rochford	No change
R21	Beckney Wood	Ashingdon/ Hockley	Minor boundary changes
R22	Potash Wood	Rochford	No change
R23	Trinity Wood	Ashingdon	Boundary re-mapped for accuracy
R24	Magnolia Nature Reserve and Fields	Ashingdon/ Hawkwell	Fields outside of the nature reserve removed as a separate site; other minor boundary changes
R25	Hyde Wood	Canewdon	No change
R26	Doggetts Pond	Rochford	Deleted
R27	Sutton Ford Bridge Pasture	Sutton	Additional grassland north of Prittle Brook added
R28	River Roach at Rochford	Rochford/ Stambridge	Former landfill area removed due to deterioration in quality
R29	Wood Sloppy	Stambridge	No change
R30	Butts Hill Pond	Canewdon	No change
R31	The Finches	Canewdon	Unsuitable road verge sections removed
R32	Lion Creek Meadow	Canewdon	No change

R33	Canewdon Special Roadside Verge	Canewdon	No change
R34	Barling Pits	Canewdon	Lagoon and seawall folding added
R35	Star Lane Pits	Great Wakering	Scrub habitat to east added; other minor boundary changes
R36	Paglesham Seawall	Paglesham	Significant extension to north
R37	Wakering Former Landfill Site	Barling Magna/ Great Wakering	Former grazing marsh to north added; name change, as no longer an active site
R38	Great Wakering Common	Great Wakering	Previously deleted area re-added
R39	Wallasea Island	Canewdon	Additional newly created habitats added and areas removed as they are now part of Crouch & Roach Estuaries SSSI

5.2 Deleted Sites

The only site proposed for deletion as a result of the current review is R26 Doggetts Pond. The condition of the site has deteriorated, with no apparent conservation management in recent years. Without more detailed species information, relating to Great Crested Newts and Water Vole, it is not certain that any of the selection criteria can be met. The site's condition could recover with positive management and survey work could establish the appropriateness of species selection criteria and so the site should be added to a list of Potential LoWS.

5.3 Proposed New Sites

The following sites were identified during this review as meeting one or more of the current selection criteria, with a brief description of their value. These sites include some original Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) deleted under the LoWS Selection Criteria in place in 2007, but are now re-selected, using the updated criteria (Essex Local Sites Partnership, 2016)

R40	Cherry Orchard Country Park,	Significant extent of publicly accessible natural green space with locally significant wildlife
R41	Round Hill Pastures	Unimproved grasslands within an old landscape area
R42	Ashingdon Pastures	Unimproved grassland
R43	Buller's Grove	Small secondary woodland deleted in 2007, but now meets revised criterion
R44	Bartonhall Grove	Small secondary woodland deleted in 2007, but now meets revised criterion
R45	Barton Hall Creek Seawall	Good quality coastal grassland with a population of Hairy Vetchling
R46	Stannets Creek	Formerly tidal creek dominated by reed with adjacent coastal habitats
R47	Marylands Nature Reserve	Secondary woodland with unusually diverse ground flora including ancient woodland indicators

5.4 Other Sites Assessed

The following sites were all visited during the course of the Review survey and assessed against LoWS Selection Criteria, but were found not to be of sufficient quality to be considered for selection. Some of these are original designated in 1993 and deleted from the network in 2007, in which case their original alpha-numeric Site of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINC) codes are given.

Barling Marsh Seawall	Now designated as part of Crouch and Roach Estuaries SSSI
G1 A127 Special Roadside Verge	Road verge disturbed by road improvements and still of insufficient quality

M1 Blounts Mosaic	Secondary woodland section has been added to R3; remainder does not meet any criterion
M2 Eastwood Rise Lake	Actively managed for angling with little remaining wildlife interest
M5 Creeksea Road Pits	Remaining pit areas are managed for angling and surrounded by scrub with little wildlife interest
W2 Hullbridge Wood	Fragment of secondary woodland degraded by public access and inappropriate management; no significant improvement since 2007
W3 Hambro Hill Wood	Small fragment of 20 th Century woodland with poor structure, adverse management and little wildlife value
Barling New Pits	Still active landfill site; not yet sufficiently stable and no evidence to support selection; adjacent seawall is part of the SSSI.
Hambro Hill landfill site	Closed landfill, now dominated by rough grass and scrub; no significant habitats or species
Trinity Wood Pasture	Possibly unimproved, but in poor condition through a combination of past neglect and current over-grazing
Fleet Head	Non-SSSI fields are improved and species-poor
South Fambridge Seawall	Large expanse of coastal grassland, cut prior to survey and apparently species-poor

6. Recommendations for Local Plan policies

The District's adopted Core Strategy (2011) and Development Management Plan (2014) have been reviewed by Place Services' Principal Planning Consultant and Principal Ecological Consultant to explore whether they are fit for purpose in protecting and enhancing LoWS in the District.

This review, to inform emerging Local Plan policies, will consider whether existing policies are in accordance with the recently published NPPF (2018) and other emerging national policy and make recommendations as to amendments that both comply with national policy requirements and the findings of the LoWS review. Should the decision be made within the Local Plan for site-specific policies to support the Plan's allocations, then these can also be reviewed where relevant, or recommendations made in this regard, in line with the specific findings regarding the future management of any affected LoWS or those that have the potential to qualify as identified within the review. The LoWS review has been completed in advance of the Preferred Options Document.

Any LoWS owned by Rochford DC, not already designated as a statutory Local Nature Reserve, should be considered for formal designation. Appropriate management of natural greenspace within the District and particularly locally designated site such as LoWS, will contribute to the health and wellbeing of its residents and visitors alike.

The following table identifies those relevant parts of the NPPF and discusses the Council's adopted Development Plan Documents' subsequent compliance with national requirements. The table also offers recommendations for future policy.

NPPF (2012) and (2018) Requirement	Core Strategy (2011) / Development Management Plan (2014)
<p>Paragraph 174 of the NPPF states that,</p> <p><i>'To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:</i></p> <p><i>a) Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.'</i></p> <p>The NPPF hints at this hierarchy in Annex 2 (Glossary) as <i>'International, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity: All international sites (Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, and Ramsar sites), national sites (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) and locally designated sites including Local Wildlife Sites.'</i></p> <p>Paragraph 171 states that,</p> <p><i>'Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.'</i></p> <p>Paragraph 175 states that,</p> <p><i>'When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:</i></p> <p><i>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;</i></p>	<p><i>Core Strategy Policy ENV1 – Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Landscape and Habitats and the Protection of Historical and Archaeological Sites</i></p> <p><i>The Council will maintain, restore and enhance sites of international, national and local nature conservation importance. These will include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Ramsar Sites, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Ancient Woodlands, Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) and Local Wildlife Sites (LoWSs). In particular, the Council will support the implementation of the Crouch and Roach Management Plan.</i></p> <p><i>The Council will also protect landscapes of historical and archaeological interest.</i></p> <p><u>Recommendations:</u></p> <p>The Core Strategy sets out a 'catch-all' policy for all designated sites without differentiating between them in a manner commensurate to their level of designation. The listing of the designations within the Policy is hierarchical however.</p> <p>Crucially however, the NPPF in Paragraph 175 focuses on applying criteria based principles only on 'habitats' sites (Natura 2k sites) and candidate 'habitats' sites, SSSIs and 'irreplaceable habitats' such as, but potentially not limited to, ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees. Locally designated sites such as LoWS are not included within this paragraph. Planning Practice Guidance states that, <i>'areas of irreplaceable natural habitat, such as ancient woodland or limestone pavement, the significance of which may be derived from habitat age, uniqueness, species diversity and/or the impossibilities of re-creation.'</i> Effectively, the LoWS review exists to identify such habitats.</p> <p>It is recommended that emerging Local Plan policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include Policy justification / supporting text that offers a hierarchical list of relevant designations for the purposes of identifying

NPPF (2012) and (2018) Requirement	Core Strategy (2011) / Development Management Plan (2014)
<p><i>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;</i></p> <p><i>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</i></p> <p><i>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.'</i></p>	<p>'alternative' sites within Paragraph 175(a).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That this list includes Local Wildlife Sites (LoWS) and additionally Local Geological Sites (LoGS) under a title of 'irreplaceable habitats'. This can also include all Priority Habitats, wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them. • That the Policy is expanded to include further detail on minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures as espoused in paragraph 170(d) of the NPPF. • That development management policy is developed / Policy DM27 – Species and Habitat Protection is enhanced to include reference to the ecological hierarchy, and the requirements for developers should sites have the potential for harm, either through project level HRA (for 'habitats' / Natura 2k sites) or through other types of ecological assessment (for 'irreplaceable habitats' as defined).

7. LoGS site descriptions in Rochford District

Geo Essex has kindly provided details of Local Geological Sites (LoGS) which meet the criteria for The Earth Science-Conservation Review (see Table below).

Table 2.1 The Earth Science Conservation Classification

	Type of site	Site code
Exposure or extensive	Active quarries and pits	EA
	Disused quarries and pits	ED
	Coastal cliffs and foreshore	EC
	River and stream sections	EW
	Inland outcrops	EO
	Exposure underground mines and tunnels	EU
	Extensive buried interest	EB
	Road, rail and canal cuttings	ER
Integrity	Static (fossil) geomorphological	IS
	Active process geomorphological	IA
	Caves	IC
	Karst	IK
Finite	Finite mineral, fossil or other geological	FM
	Mine dumps	FD
	Finite underground mines and tunnels	FU
	Finite buried interest	FB

The two sites in the table below identified as LoGS should be referenced along with LoWS as ‘locally designated sites’ within the emerging Rochford Local Plan.



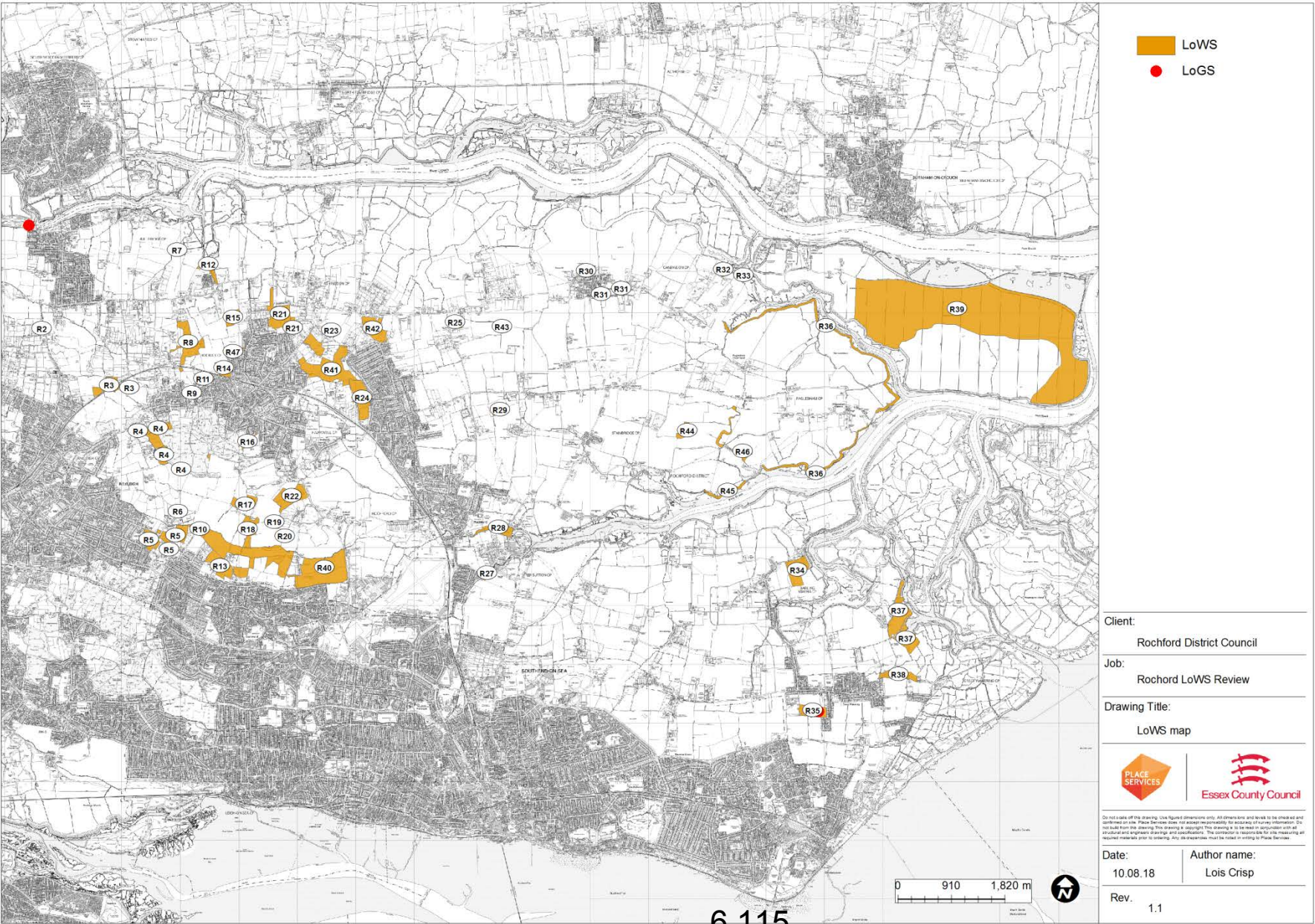
Local Geological Sites

There are two geological sites identified by GeoEssex during their third batch of LoGS as meeting one or more of the current GeoEssex selection criteria, with a brief description of their value. There were no LoGS identified in Rochford District during the first batch of 12 LoGS in Dec 2014, nor the second batch identified in July 2015. The locations are shown on the map in Appendix 1 with LoWS.

PLACE	SITE NAME	Geol site designations	Existing Notified RIGS?	Earth Science Conservation Classification	Site assessment score	Wildlife or other designations (existing SSSIs and LoWS)	SITE CATEGORY	GRID REF	Vulnerability (High, medium, or low)	Site in need of periodic maintenance?	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SITE For a full description of each site please refer to the Essex Field Club's website or the LoGS site records (citations).
Great Wakering	Star Lane Pits	LoGS (third batch - proposed)		ED	24	LoWS	Periglacial deposits and features (includes loess)	TQ 939 872	Medium		The only place in Essex where a visible section of brickearth (loess) can be found. Low cliffs of brickearth can be seen adjacent to footpaths in this pit which is important for its wildlife. Loess is a fine silt which originated as a wind-blown (aeolian) dust carried great distances from cold, dry land close to an ice sheet to settle and be compacted to form a sedimentary rock. It was probably deposited during the most recent glaciation of Britain (at least 20,000 years ago) although it is very difficult to date and some may be older.
Hullbridge	Hullbridge Foreshore	LoGS (third batch - proposed)		EC	22	SSSI	Holocene deposits	TQ 804 955	Low		Prehistoric land surface, perhaps as much as 8,000 years old is revealed at low tide. Peat beds with Mesolithic flint implements. The site then lay well inland. Important site for understanding sea level change. Part of Crouch and Roach Estuaries SSSI.



Appendix 1 Map of Rochford LoWS and LoGS



Appendix 2 LoWS selection criteria (from ELSP, 2016)

Habitat criteria:

Habitat Criterion 1 (HC1) – Ancient Woodland Sites

“All sites considered to be ancient woodland shall be eligible for selection.”

Habitat Criterion 2 (HC2) – Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on Non-ancient Sites

“All significant areas of non-ancient Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland will be eligible for selection.”

Habitat Criterion 3 (HC3) – Other Priority Habitat Woodland Types on Non-ancient Sites

“Any area of Lowland Beech and Yew woodland (e.g. NVC type W15) or Wet Woodland, as defined in the Habitats of Principal Importance in England descriptions, will be eligible for selection.”

Habitat Criterion 4 (HC4) – Wood-pasture and Parkland

“Any remnant area of mature parkland and/or wood-pasture, preferably with veteran trees and/or a semi-natural ground flora will be eligible for selection, together with any more recent parkland sites that support inherent ecological interest and whose ecological value is not compromised by amenity use or other primary functions”.

Habitat Criterion 5 (HC5) – Woody Scrub

“Stands of woody scrub that support exceptional diversity, uncommon shrub assemblages, and/or which provide a valuable component of a site’s ecological value will be eligible for selection”.

Habitat Criterion 6 (HC6) – Veteran Trees

“Veteran trees known or suspected to be of specific nature conservation interest, for example supporting significant invertebrate assemblages, and/or epiphytic bryophytes and lichens, will be eligible for selection, even in the absence of other associated semi-natural habitat. The tree or tree group should encompass a sufficient area with appropriate habitat conditions for the associated species interest to be maintained”.

Habitat Criterion 7 (HC7) – Old Orchards

“All traditional orchards will be eligible for selection, particularly those that have retained mature fruit trees.”

Habitat Criterion 8 (HC8) – Hedgerows and Green Lanes

“Hedgerows and green lanes shall be eligible for selection if they are assessed as having significant ecological value in terms of:

- *their intrinsic flora and fauna*
- *a defined ecological function in the landscape”*

Habitat Criterion 9 (HC9) – Lowland Meadows

“All old, largely unimproved grasslands identifiable as falling within the definition of the NVC MG5 Lowland Meadow vegetation type will be eligible for selection.”

Habitat Criterion 10 (HC10) – River Floodplain

“Significant areas of river floodplain grassland should be considered for selection, especially those areas still subject to seasonal inundation. The role of such grasslands as wildlife corridors should also be considered”.

Habitat Criterion 11 (HC11) – Other Neutral Grasslands

“Unimproved or semi-improved¹² pastures or meadows that do not clearly fit criterion HC9 shall be eligible for selection if they support features that indicate long continuity as grassland or support notable populations of invertebrates. Special consideration should be given to sites listed in the Grassland Inventory for Essex and to sites supporting plants listed in Appendix⁴”.

Habitat Criterion 12 (HC12) – Lowland Calcareous Grassland

“All areas of grassland supporting assemblages of typical chalk grassland species included in Appendix 5 should be considered for selection.”

Habitat Criterion 13 (HC13) – Heathland and Acid Grassland

“Any site supporting characteristic heathland or acid grassland vegetation, including deteriorated sites with the potential for restoration shall be eligible for selection”.

Habitat Criterion 14 (HC14) – Lowland Fen Vegetation

“Significant areas of lowland fen vegetation¹⁴, or such habitat known to support notable species, will be eligible for selection. Usually such sites will include the associated water body or source of groundwater, if applicable.”

Habitat Criterion 15 (HC15) – Reedbeds

*“All significant stands of Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) will be eligible for selection.”*

Habitat Criterion 16 (HC16) – Lakes and Reservoirs

“Lake and reservoir LoWS identified on the basis of Mosaic Habitat or Species Criteria should be of sufficient size and habitat quality to maintain the seasonal or resident population of that species. Where a seasonal species utilises several water bodies during the course of its stay, all such bodies should be selected”.

Habitat Criterion 17 (HC17) – Ponds

“Pond LoWS identified on the basis of Species Criteria should be of sufficient size and habitat quality to maintain the population of that species at a sustainable level.”

Habitat Criterion 18 (HC18) – Rivers

“Where a section of river, stream, canal or borrow dyke is designated via Species Selection Criteria, a minimum 500 metre section of that water course shall be designated (250 metres upstream and downstream of a positive sample site or 250 metres upstream and downstream of the end points of a cluster of records from the same population). The Site shall be deemed to extend at least 2 metres away from the top of the bank into the adjacent habitat.”

Habitat Criterion 19 (HC19) – Extended Riverine Habitat

“Where two designated sections of watercourse are separated by no more than 1000 metres of undesignated water, the intervening section may be included within one large site, if it is deemed that the central section has the potential to be restored to good condition or realistically colonised by the species concerned”.

Habitat Criterion 20 (HC20) – Complex Riverine Habitats

“Sections of river that support a suite of natural features, leading to a complex riverine habitat structure will be eligible for selection.”

Habitat Criterion 21 (HC21) – Coastal Grazing Marsh

“All areas of coastal grazing marsh shall be eligible for selection”.

Habitat Criterion 22 (HC22) – Tidal Transition Zones

“All sites exhibiting an unrestricted upper saltmarsh to grassland transition will be eligible for selection”.

Habitat Criterion 23 (HC23) – Saltmarsh and Mudflats

“All areas of saltmarsh and other intertidal habitats outside of SSSIs will be considered for selection. Newly created habitats within managed retreat zones can be considered once they have acquired a typical flora and use by other coastal wildlife is demonstrated”.

Habitat Criterion 24 (HC24) – Saline Lagoons and Borrow Dyke Habitats

“Sections of borrow dyke and tidal or semi-tidal brackish or saline lagoons known to support a flora and fauna characteristic of saline lagoon conditions will be eligible for selection”.

Habitat Criterion 25 (HC25) – Sand Dune and Shingle Beach Vegetation

“All areas of sand dune and shingle habitat exhibiting a characteristic land form and flora will be eligible for selection”.

Habitat Criterion 26 (HC26) – Maritime Cliffs and Slopes

“Maritime Cliffs and Slopes identified on account of one or more significant species or groups of species should be of sufficient extent, either in isolation or as a clearly recognisable chain of inter-related sites, should be of sufficient extent to include habitat capable of supporting sustainable populations of the species concerned.”

Habitat Criterion 27 (HC27) – Post-industrial Sites

“Brownfield/post-industrial sites or derelict buildings/structures of high nature conservation value will be eligible for selection if they are known to support notable species or where it can be demonstrated they provide the habitat qualities necessary to support such species. The site may include sections of land that might not otherwise qualify for selection, if they provide one or more of the ecological requirements of the notable species”.

Habitat Criterion 28 (HC28) – Small-Component Mosaics

“A site comprising two or more sub-habitats, each of which just fails to be selected as a Site within its own main habitat criterion group or on species grounds, will be eligible for selection”.

Habitat Criterion 29 (HC29) – Habitat Extension Mosaics

“Where a site that would not on its own qualify for consideration as a LoWS provides a significant and clearly identifiable extension to the habitat of an adjacent LoWS, then the habitat extension area should be added to the LoWS”.

Habitat Criterion 30 (HC30) – Wildlife Corridors

“Where two or more LoWS are physically linked by additional habitat of a type that would allow the dispersal and interchange of species within each site, then these corridors should be included within the LoWS.”

Habitat Criterion 31 (HC31) – Accessible Natural Greenspace 57

“A site that comes close to qualifying under other selection criteria can be eligible for selection based upon its amenity, cultural and/or education value close to a centre of population.”

Species criteria:

Species Criterion 1 (SC1) – Vascular Plants

“Sites supporting significant populations of ‘notable’ vascular plants will be eligible for selection”.

Species Criterion 2 (SC2) – Bryophytes

“Sites supporting significant populations of ‘notable’ bryophytes will be eligible for selection”.

Species Criterion 3 (SC3) – Lichens

“Sites supporting significant populations of ‘notable’ lichens will be eligible for selection”.

Species Criterion 4 (SC4) – Fungi

“Sites supporting significant populations of ‘notable’ fungi will be eligible for selection”.

Species Criterion 5 (SC5) – Notable Bird Species

“Discrete habitat areas known to support significant populations of notable bird species, whether breeding or over-wintering, will be eligible for selection.”

Species Criterion 6 (SC6) – Exceptional Populations of Common Bird Species

“Discrete habitat areas that regularly support exceptional breeding, feeding, roosting/resting or over-wintering populations of relatively commonplace species will be considered for selection”.

Species Criterion 7 (SC7) – Dormouse

“All sites confirmed as supporting populations of Dormouse will be eligible for selection. Sites should include all adjoining areas of suitable Dormouse habitat and important movement corridors (HC30).”

Species Criterion 8 (SC8) – Barbastelle (and other Annex II) bats

“All sites containing a maternity roost of Barbastelle bats (or other Annex II bat species should they be recorded in Essex in the future) will be eligible for selection.”

Species Criterion 9 (SC9) – Other Bat Breeding Colonies

“All sites, except dwelling houses, regularly supporting breeding colonies of four or more bat species, or an exceptional breeding roost or colony of one or more species, will be eligible for selection.”

Species Criterion 10 (SC10) – Bat Hibernation Sites

“All sites, except dwelling houses, supporting exceptional numbers of hibernating bats of one or more species will be eligible for selection.”

Species Criterion 11 (SC11) – Protection of Otter Holts

“A confirmed, natural or artificial, well established and regularly used otter holt, including an appropriate buffer zone of up to 250 metres up and down stream, will be eligible for selection.”

Species Criterion 12 (SC12) – Breeding Water Vole Colonies

“Any watercourse or wetland system supporting a viable breeding population of Water Vole will be eligible for selection.”

Species Criterion 13 (SC13) - Hotspots for Amphibian Diversity

“Any water body, other than a garden pond, known to support significant populations of three or more species of breeding amphibian will be eligible for selection.”

Species Criterion 14 (SC14) - Palmate Newts

“Any water body, other than a garden pond, known to support a breeding population of Palmate Newt will be eligible for selection.”

Species Criterion 15 (SC15) - Great Crested Newts

“Any water body, other than a garden pond, known to support an exceptional breeding population of Great Crested Newts will be eligible for selection.”

Species Criterion 16 (SC16) - Hotspots for Reptile Diversity

“Any site supporting significant populations of three or more reptile species will be eligible for selection.”

Species Criterion 17 (SC17) – White-clawed Crayfish

“All populations of White-clawed crayfish will be eligible for selection. Any designated Site should include suitable buffering both upstream and downstream.”

Species Criterion 18 (SC18) – Invertebrates listed as Species of Principal Importance in England

“All significant populations of terrestrial and freshwater aquatic invertebrates listed as Species of Principal Importance in England will be eligible for selection.”

Species Criteria 19 (SC19) – Important invertebrate assemblages

“Significant populations of notable invertebrate species, and/or important invertebrate assemblages (i.e. unusual or uncommon assemblages, or exceptional diversity) will be eligible for selection. In deciding the significance of a species, reference should be made to any available Essex Red Data List, national Red Data Book or “Review”.

Species Criteria 20 (SC20) – Notable ‘flagship’ macro-invertebrates

“Exceptional populations or high species diversity of non-notable macro-invertebrates (e.g. dragonflies, damselflies and butterflies) will be eligible for selection.”

Appendix 3 Rochford LoWS Review Survey Visit Checklist

Fieldwork approach

Conduct a walkabout survey to visit or pass by each part of the site.. For 'criteria' habitats, list 'significant species' of plants – such as Ancient Woodland Indicators or indicators of semi-natural grassland.. For woodland, the key attributes to be aware of are their structure (are they suitable for holding wildlife?) and tree and shrub regeneration (is deer or trampling affecting natural processes?); for grassland, key attributes are the presence/absence of desirable or undesirable plant species.

The walkabout survey is successful if it provides evidence of the character (presence in healthy quantity) and condition (not affected by negative influences) of the designated criteria. The evidence should be sufficient to decide whether the site continues to deserve its place on the LoWS register for the stated criteria, whether other criteria (for which you provide evidence) are now more relevant, or whether the condition of the habitat has declined and the character for which the site has been designated has been compromised. Management issues should be identified, particularly if they have the potential to affect the validity of the given criteria.

Fieldwork targets

- Ground-truth presence, character and condition of known (or new) criteria features;
- Map habitats and location of criteria (both the given ones and others you encounter);
- Take photos and confirm ID with Lead Surveyor remotely;
- Note all biodiversity records for collation to provide quality control on decisions as to whether a LoWS has improved or declined and if it should continue to be identified as a LoWS; and
- Produce text sufficient to describe the character and condition of the habitat and species criteria, and identify management issues.

Site name:

Visit date:

Survey pack includes

Generic to each site:

- ☐ Survey checklist and protocol (this document)
- ☐ LoWS survey form (for current sites) or LoWS monitoring form (for deleted sites)
- ☐ LoWS criteria (2016) – relevant parts
- ☐ Point of work risk assessment
- ☐ Letter of authorisation/power of entry

Equipment:

- ☐ Camera
- ☐ Binoculars
- ☐ Weather writer
- ☐ Pencils
- ☐ Mobile phone
- ☐ Lone working device as necessary
- ☐ Tape measure (particularly for grasslands)
- ☐ GPS – for woodland sites especially
- ☐ Identification guides

Appendix 4 List of consultees

(in alphabetical order of organization)

Organisation & Position	Contact name
RSPB Area Manager for Essex East of England office	Yianni Andrews
Buglife - Projects Manager	Jamie Robins
Butterfly Conservation - Area rep	Rob Smith
Environment Agency	Will Akast
Environment Agency	Tim Gardiner
Essex Amphibian & Reptile Group - Chair	Ray Cranfield
Essex Amphibian & Reptile Group	John Cranfield
Essex Bat Group - Chair	Pat Hatch
Essex Birdwatching Society - Chair	Gerry Johnson
Essex Botany Group	Ken Adams
Essex Field Club – President and County Recorder for Hymenoptera, Spiders & other Arachnida & Woodlice	Peter Harvey
Essex Mammal Records - County recorder	John Dobson
Essex Wildlife Trust - Local Wildlife Sites Officer	John More
Essex Wildlife Trust - warden of Lower Raypits and Lion Creek Reserves	Julian Kaye
Essex Wildlife Trust - Southend & Rochford Local Group	James Porter
Local naturalist, ex Southend museum	Roger Payne
National Trust- Regional Wildlife Advisor	Stuart Warrington
National Trust- Rayleigh Mount Local Committee	Mr M Stone
Natural England - Lead advisor, Essex	Charlie Williams
South Essex Natural History Society - Membership/Chair	Vera Tring/Pat Wortley

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