

Appendix 5

Evidence to support de-registration of the site as a Local Nature Reserve

Habitats present of the site consist of predominantly arable and species-poor improved grassland with common weed species and grasses on field margins, bramble scrub and shrub species such as hazel and blackthorn. Habitats are all considered to be common and widespread. A summary of the habitats present is provided below.

1.0 Habitats

1.1 Field to the north of Preston Down Road

Arable field with oat crop at time of survey. Southern boundary consists of fence with narrow band of scrub and very narrow field margin containing common weed species such as pineapple weed, creeping buttercup, broadleaved dock, common field speedwell, pale smartweed, scarlet pimpernel and fat hen. Field maple with grassy vegetation beneath containing cock's-foot, timothy, rough meadow grass and bramble. Divided from road verge by a post and rail fence. Western boundary consists post and barbed fence. Northern boundary consists mature outgrown hedge with wide margin at the base. Ruderal vegetation including hogweed, broad-leave dock, lesser burdock, common nettle and rank grasses. Some hazel stools present and a number of large ash trees. Hawthorn, blackthorn, sycamore also present. Eastern boundary consists barbed fence on bank. Mature Oaks noted with other woody species such as blackthorn, elder, dog rose, bramble, hazel, dense bramble, ash, holly and ivy.

1.2 Field to south of Preston Down Road

Field predominantly consists of species-poor lolium seeded grassland with white clover. Site entrance consists hardcore/rubble with disturbed ground and weedy species such as knotgrass, pineapple weed, dandelion, broadleaved dock, greater plantain, creeping buttercup, perennial sow-thistle, creeping bent and Yorkshire fog. Eastern boundary consists a mature hedge with rank grassland and ruderal vegetation including hawthorn, prunus sp. Ash, English elm, blackthorn, bramble, goat's beard ivy, black bryony, common nettle, common bent, timothy and cock's-foot. Southern boundary consists of woodland edge separated by post and rail fence with scrub patches and overhanging trees. Sycamore, oak, hazel, ash, bramble, common knapweed, creeping thistle, timothy, Yorkshire fog, enchanter's nightshade, common nettle, hawthorn, dog rose. Western boundary consists a fence. Northern boundary consists a mature hedge with post and rail fence. Species consist of oak, field maple, ash, blackthorn, ivy and bramble.

2.0 Protected species surveys

2.1 Bat activity surveys

To date the observations of activity on site consist of predominantly Common Pipistrelle and Soprano pipistrelle using the site to commute and forage (along boundaries, particularly adjacent to woodland off site). Occasional passes by Myotis, Noctule, Greater & Lesser Horseshoe (4 passes in all surveys completed during 2018/19), Long-eared sp. and one recording of a barbastelle. Please note, these surveys are still underway and automated surveys have not been included within the summary.

2.2 Dormice

No observations of dormouse or their nests have been identified at the site during surveys to date.

2.3 Reptiles

Reptile surveys are currently underway.

2.4 Bird surveys

Garden and parkland species of birds identified on site including blue tit, goldfinch, house sparrow, blackbird, robin, dunnock, wood pigeon, wren and blackcap. Foraging and nesting in site boundaries.

3.0 Designation criteria in Devon of Local Nature Reserves

Devon Wildlife Trust criteria for designation of a Local Nature Reserve are based on scientific criteria such as the size, species diversity and rarity of communities represented and the presence of rare or notable species. Local Nature Reserve sites may also have particularly important social, educational, recreational, landscape, aesthetic or potential values.

It is our professional opinion that none of the habitats present at the site warrant categorisation as a Local Nature Reserve. It is also our professional opinion that the protected species identified on site do not occur in the numbers or frequency at the site to warrant its designation as a Local Nature Reserve.

Date: 6 September 2019