

Lilley's Wood, Creeting St. Mary (originally The Wildwood)

Needham lake Carr Park TM 09562 54768, Access from Needham Lake TM 09393 55046 along the Gipping Valley footpath

This 2 acre piece of agricultural land was originally given to Needham Market Town Council by Mrs. Lilley, although it is located in Creeting St. Mary. It extends from the sewage works north along the east bank of the River Gipping – though the river path is not part of the land.

Last year ownership was passed to the CSM Parish Council and they are now seeking volunteers to help maintain it – as well as someone to oversee the whole project. Lilley's Wood is not a wood as such but land that was under cultivation, when we came to CSM in 1981 and was never very productive being heavy clay over chalk.

It is part of a registered County Wildlife Site covering the whole of the regenerating woodland between Flordon Rd. and the sewage works along to Coddenham Road and the car boot sale area.

As such it has been extensively surveyed for its *wildlife* interest – which is mainly the chalk downland plants which are really rather rare in the area as this is one of few geological chalk outcrops. The chalk pit adjacent we believe supplied flints for buildings at Alder Carr Farm.

Suffolk Wildlife Trust and Suffolk Naturalists' Society Recorders have done surveys and are in agreement that the grassland is actually of the greatest importance as it hosts, not only orchids – sometimes in abundance but many interesting plants. While there is a good mix of shrubs providing food, shelter and nest sites for birds. A long term bird study was carried out for many years so the species using the site are well documented. In addition the RSPB is funding a Turtle Dove feeding project on the field adjacent because the area has been identified as having nesting potential – the birds have been seen in the past.

The ecologist's recommendations are as follows:

The chalky soils on the site have given rise to a diverse plant community including a number of notable species such as yellow-wort, burnet saxifrage and ploughman's spikenard. Ant hills are numerous in open areas. Patches of bare ground and short turf created by rabbit grazing are additional wildlife features. The mosaic of habitats present on the site is of high ecological value for a range of taxonomic groups including birds, reptiles, orthopterans (grasshoppers), butterflies hymenopterans (bees) and other pollinators.

The aim of future management should be to maintain the existing mosaic of different successional stages from bare patches, rabbit grazed and disturbed ground, patches of species-rich, short and long grass, young scattered scrub and blocks of dense scrub of high value for breeding birds and invertebrates. It is recommended that non-native planted trees particularly grey alder are removed as soon as possible as they are regenerating and encroaching in the open glades. Plastic tree guards are littering the ground in a few places and should be removed if possible.

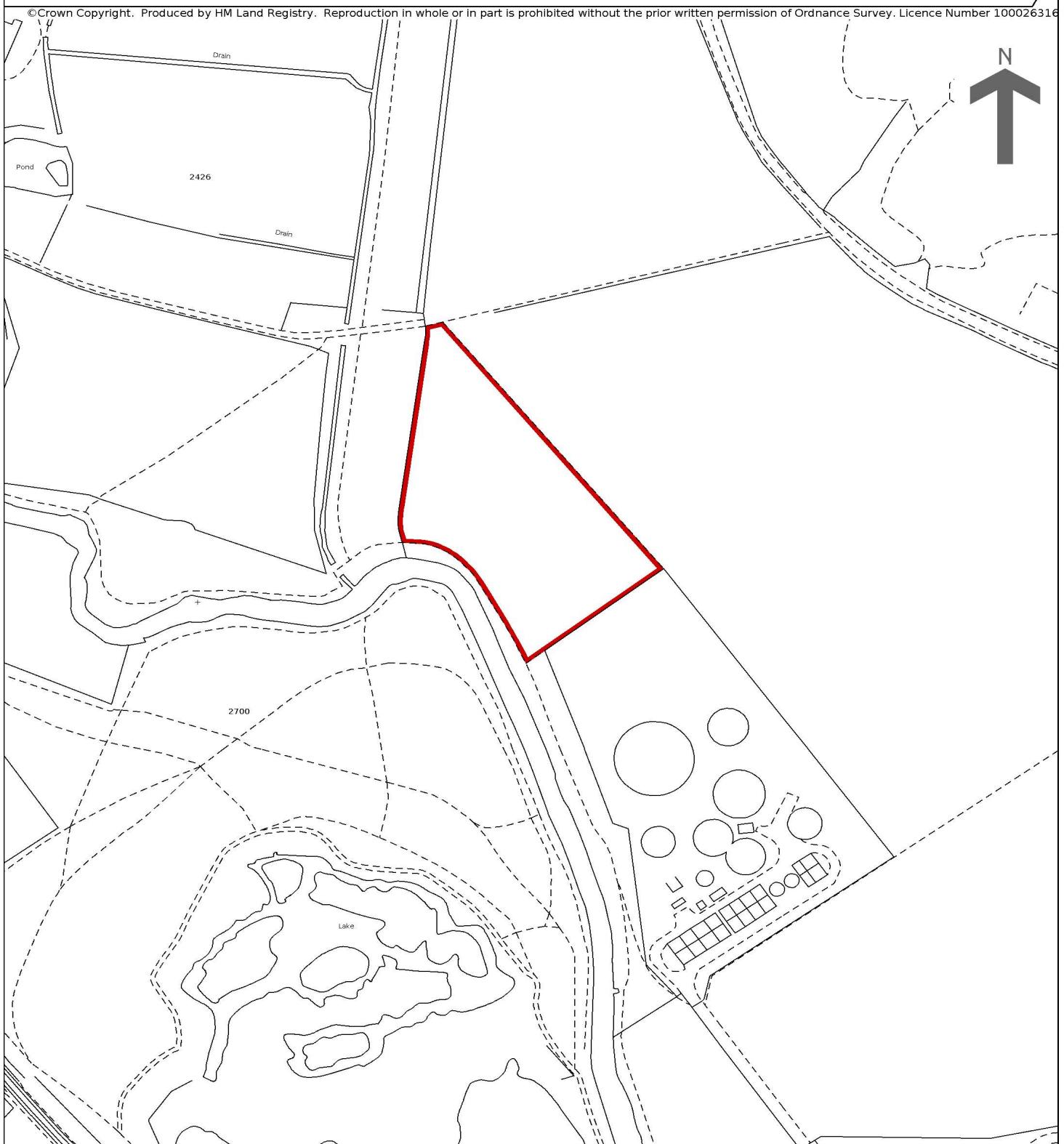
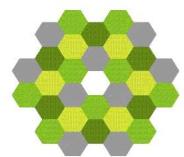
Further Surveys would guide management but generally it can be seen that much could be achieved in the first instance by controlling the blackthorn and non-native trees to maintain grassy areas of floristic interest – and remove the plastic tree guards. Decisions need to be taken on how to balance public (and dog) access with the needs of the wildlife.

Joan Hardingham

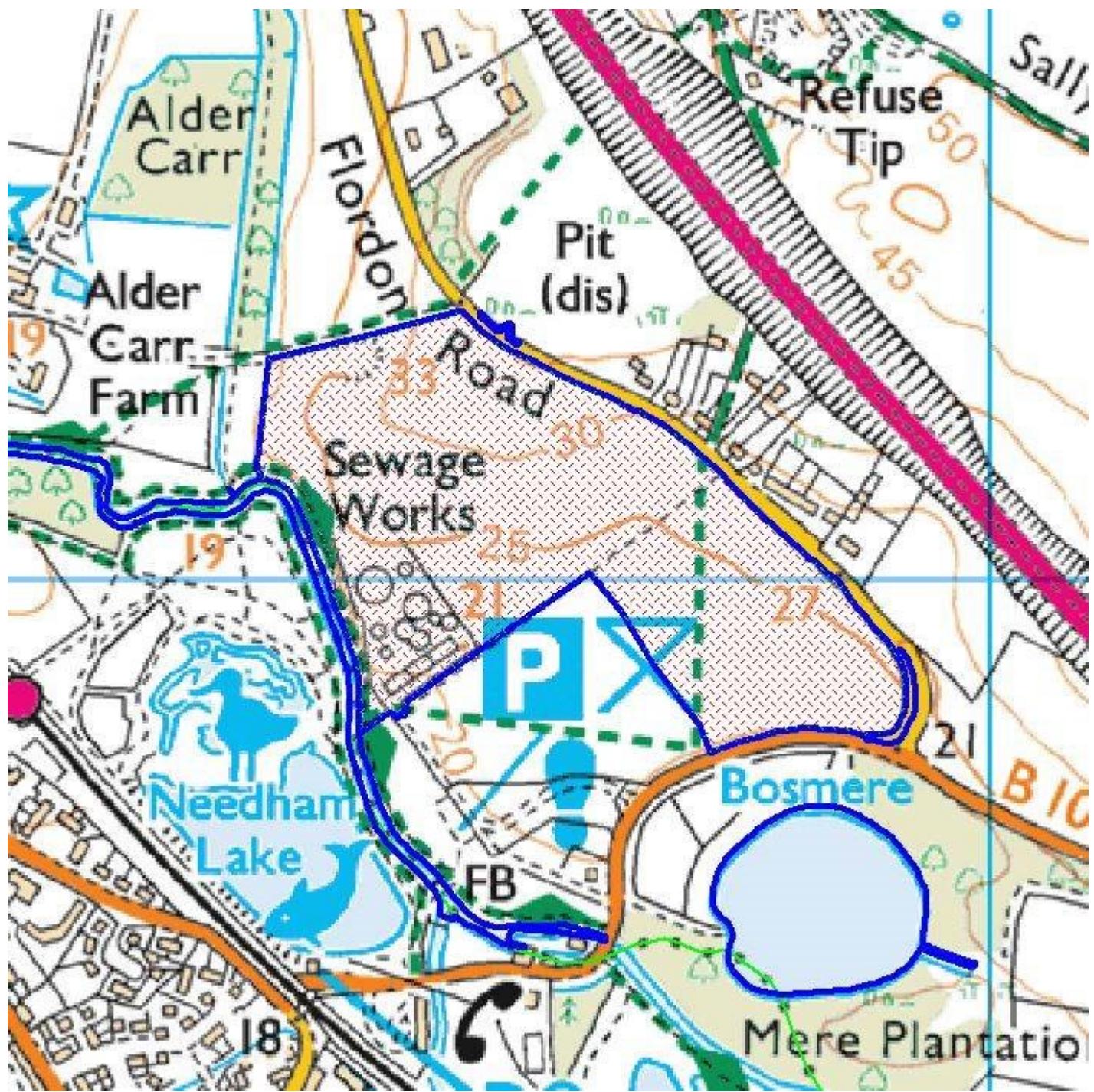
HM Land Registry

Official copy of title plan

Title number **SK240596**
Ordnance Survey map reference **TM0955SW**
Scale **1:2500**
Administrative area **Suffolk : Mid Suffolk**







Suffolk County Wildlife Sites

What are County Wildlife Sites?

County Wildlife Sites (CWSs) are areas known to be of county or regional importance for wildlife.

CWS designation is non - statutory, but is recognition of a site's high value for biodiversity.

CWSs have been identified throughout Suffolk and range from small meadows, green lanes, dykes and hedges through to much larger areas of ancient woodlands, heathland, greens, commons and marsh.



Why are County Wildlife Sites Important?

- Outside of statutorily protected areas (such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Local and National Nature Reserves), CWSs are the most important areas for wildlife in Suffolk
- CWSs can support both locally and nationally threatened wildlife species and habitats
- Many sites support habitats and species that are priorities for conservation under the UK and Local Biodiversity Action Plans

CWSs complement statutorily protected areas and nature reserves by helping to maintain habitat links between these sites. The importance of ecological networks for conservation is now widely recognised, better enabling wildlife to survive on reserves and in the wider the countryside. Linked habitats are also likely to be important in allowing wildlife to adapt to the effects of climate change.

Suffolk County Wildlife Site System – how does it work?

Suffolk Wildlife Trust, Suffolk County Council, Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service and Natural England manage the Suffolk County Wildlife Site system in partnership. This CWS system involves:

- Maintaining an up to date database of CWSs in Suffolk. Partners, local authorities and other conservation organisations have copies of the database
- Designating new CWSs and modifying information held on existing sites when changes occur. The CWS panel meets to review new and existing sites which are notified in accordance with selection criteria.
- Supplying information on wildlife interest of CWSs to landowners and other organisations whose work may affect CWSs.

The importance of CWSs is recognised by local authorities in Suffolk and they have all developed policies that give CWSs some protection in line with national planning policy. If a CWS is likely to be affected by development the views of the CWS partners is normally sought as part of the consultation process.



Environmental Impact Assessments are required by Natural England when areas of uncultivated land are to undergo agricultural change including operations such as increases in stock density, cultivation, soil spreading and new drainage work.

It is important to be aware that the designation of a site as a CWS does not confer any new rights of access either to the general public or conservation organisations.



Working with Landowners and Managers of CWS

The high wildlife value of many CWSs has developed through land management practices that have allowed wildlife to thrive e.g. traditional and historical management such as rotational coppicing of woodland, hay cutting or grazing of grasslands. Ensuring the continuation of such appropriate management is vital to maintain the wildlife value of a site. Establishing and maintaining good working relationships with landowners and managers is therefore essential

The CWS partnership appreciates the difficulties that achieving the conservation management of CWSs can present and is therefore happy to offer advice on management and on potential sources of funding.

Free Advice to CWS owners and managers includes

- Information on the wildlife and nature conservation interest of the site
- Advice and site visits can be made to establish the best management to maintain and enhance wildlife value. Suffolk Wildlife Trust is always happy to offer site visits.
- Advice on suitable contractors, contacts for possible graziers and help and advice on applying for sources of grant funding for management.

For further information on Suffolk County Wildlife Sites

Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service. Telephone 01473 433547

Martin Sanford martin.sanford@suffolk.gov.uk, Jane Mason jane.mason@suffolk.gov.uk and Gen Broad gen.broad@suffolk.gov.uk

Suffolk Wildlife Trust. Telephone 01473 890089

Tracey Housley tracey.housley@suffolkwildlifetrust.org

Natural England. Telephone 01284 731474

Alison Collins. alison.collins@naturalengland.org.uk

Recorder	Locality	Grid reference	Date	Common name	Species
Dorothy Casey, Juliet Hawkins, Joan Hardingham	Creeting St Mary	TM 095554	05-Oct	Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>
				Blackthorn	<i>Prunus spinosa</i>
				Bramble	<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>
				Walnut	<i>Juglans regia</i>
				Dog rose	<i>Rosa canina</i>
				Field rose	<i>Rosa arvensis</i>
				Hornbeam	<i>Carpinus betulus</i>
				Sycamore	<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>
				Alder	<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>
				Traveller's joy	<i>Clematis vitalba</i>
				Guelder rose	<i>Viburnum opulus</i>
				Oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>
				Ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>
				Spurge laurel	<i>Daphne laureola</i>
				Crab apple	<i>Malus sylvestris</i>
				Purging buckthorn	<i>Rhamnus catharticus</i>
				Whitebeam	<i>Sorbus aria</i>
				Ivy	<i>Hedera helix</i>
				Hazel	<i>Corylus avellana</i>
				Agrimony	<i>Agrimonia eupatoria</i>
				Knapweed	<i>Centaurea nigra</i>
				Blue fleabane	<i>Erigeron acer</i>
				Yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>
				Perforate St John's	<i>Hypericum perforatum</i>
				False wood brome	<i>Brachypodium sylvaticum</i>
				Musk thistle	<i>Carduus nutans</i>
				Wild carrot	<i>Daucus carota</i>
				Ploughman's spiken	<i>Inula conyzae</i>
				Wild basil	<i>Clinopodium vulgare</i>
				Yellow wort	<i>Blackstonia perfoliata</i>
				Fleabane	<i>Pulicaria dysenterica</i>
				Self heal	<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>
				Germander speedw	<i>Veronica chamaedrys</i>
				Prickly ox tongue	<i>Picris echioides</i>
				Burnet saxifrage	<i>Pimpinella saixfraga</i>
				Spear thistle	<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>
				Centaury	<i>Centaurium erythraea</i>
				Ground ivy	<i>Glechoma hederacea</i>
				Wood avens	<i>Geum urbanum</i>
				Greater plantain	<i>Plantago major</i>
				White clover	<i>Trifolium repens</i>
				Creeping buttercup	<i>Ranunculus repens</i>
				Daisy	<i>Bellis perennis</i>
				Glaucous sedge	<i>Carex flacca</i>

Fungi at Lilley Wood October 2020

Neil Mahler SNS Fungus Recorder

The vegetation was very dense making access difficult and very hard to spot anything - hopefully as the trees mature, they will produce a good canopy and shade out some of the ground vegetation. Perhaps some volunteers will have access to a brush cutter and clear some of the Ash and Alder seedlings which are going to slow up the growth of the planted specimen trees otherwise a lot will be shaded out and die.

Crinipellis scabella - on twigs, herbaceous stems etc.

Auricularia auricula-judae - Jelly Ear - decaying branches, logs etc and very rarely conifer stumps.

Hebeloma species - found by Juliet, but had decomposed too much by time I examined it at home.

Trametes versicolor - Turkey Tail

Tubaria dispersa - Hawthorn Twiglet -yellow gilled species of *Tubaria* grows on previous years Hawthorn berries.

Puccinia lagenophorae (distincta) - Daisy Rust

Lepiota cristata - Stinking Dapperling - shady area under blackthorn.

Crepidotus cesatii - an Oysterling - on dead twigs everywhere

Crepidotus luteolus - a large Oysterling, not often recorded.

Trochila ilicina - Holly Speckle - tiny black dots on Holly leaves.

Mycena tenerima - tiny white Mycena growing on same twig as *Crepidotus luteolus*.

There were other tiny species which had shrunk so much by the time I looked at them, that I could not ID them.



This shows the *Mycena tenerima* and the larger *Crepidotus luteolus*.



I think this was Yellow wort.

richardjfisk@waitrose.com 19 Apr 2021, 10:39 (2 days ago)

to me

Richard Fisk

Bryophytes

Attached is list of bryophytes that I recorded on Thursday, despite the earlier forecast it turned out to be rather wet and cold.

The site is dominated by scrub which is rather unproductive so far as bryophytes are concerned. On the ground beneath it was a carpet of mostly *Homalothecium lutescens* (Yellow feather-moss) an attractive yellow green moss typical of base rich ground with a few other Feather-mosses such as *Callierginella cuspidata* and *Kindbergia praelonga*. There were very few trees large enough to support any epiphytic species so I found only a few bits of *Orthotrichum* sp. and only an odd patch of the liverworts *Frullania dilatata* and *Metzgeria furcata*. Apart from the well worn paths there was no bare ground. There were a number of small mounds resembling ant hills (not sure of their origin) and I failed to find any of the species associated with arable land that this once was. I had hoped to find a few of the small winter annual species but it was only on a couple of the small earth mounds that I managed to find a few plants of *Microbryum davallianum* and they were past their best perhaps my visit was too late in the season. There were no species of any significance.

Overall the dense scrub, lack of mature trees and of bare ground means the site does not have any real value for bryophytes and whatever work is done with regard to scrub removal and any other disturbance is likely to add to the variety of species found there.

Sorry if this sounds rather negative as I have just said any done is likely to improve the habitat for bryophytes.

Best wishes

Richard

Initial site assessment (05/10/2020) and recommendations for Wildwood, Creeting St Mary

The 2 acre site known locally as Wildwood was in arable production around 15 years ago. The site was unproductive farmland and since cropping ceased it has been allowed to regenerate naturally with little intervention apart from the planting of some trees in a few areas. Situated close to Alder Carr Farm and north of the sewage works, the site slopes gently down to the River Gipping in the west.

Donated to Needham Market Council by a local landowner a few years ago, the site is criss-crossed with a number of paths and is well used by local people for informal recreation. The Council who wishes to manage the area for the benefit of wildlife and the local community is keen for baseline surveys to be carried out to guide decisions on future management.

Natural regeneration has enabled the development of a mosaic of habitats, consisting of mixed, dense and scattered scrub and trees, interspersed with grassy glades. Within the dense blocks of scrub consisting largely of blackthorn, bramble and hawthorn can be found a good range of other woody species, including dogwood, hazel, dog rose and buckthorn. Mature trees are largely ash with occasional field maple, hornbeam, oak, walnut, willow and some planted non-native species for example maples and grey alder. The chalky soils on the site have given rise to a diverse plant community including a number of notable species such as yellow-wort, burnet saxifrage and ploughman's spikenard. Ant hills are numerous in open areas. Patches of bare ground and short turf created by rabbit grazing are additional wildlife features.

The mosaic of habitats present on the site is of high ecological value for a range of taxonomic groups including birds, reptiles, orthopterans, butterflies and other pollinators.

Recommendations

The aim of future management should be to maintain the existing mosaic of different successional stages from bare patches, rabbit grazed and disturbed ground, patches of species-rich, short and long grass, young scattered scrub and blocks of dense scrub of high value for breeding birds and invertebrates.

It is recommended that non-native planted trees particularly grey alder are removed as soon as possible as they are regenerating and encroaching in the open glades. Plastic tree guards are littering the ground in a few places and should be removed if possible.

Detailed species surveys planned for 2021 will be important to determine the ecological value of the site and to guide decisions about future management.

Notes on site visit – land near Needham Market STW, Creeting St Mary

Thank you for showing me the site on the hill beside the sewage treatment works that is likely to be taken on by the parish council as a community wildlife site.

The site is a former abandoned field with areas of scrub and woodland created by tree and shrub planting interspersed with more open glades, linked by paths across the site and with planted hedges on at least 2 boundaries. The site is sloping from the top of the site down to the River Gipping. [I realise that I am unsure as to whether the site incorporates the banks of the Gipping or stops above the riverside path.] It is part of a similar complex of other woodland, scrub and open areas that surrounds it and extends around the STW and abuts the MSDC country park.

We discussed what might be the options for its future management for wildlife and people. We learnt of its most recent history when meeting the 'last trustee' of the trust that is passing the land across to the parish council. He talked of planting over the last 15 or so years that included help from the local schools. He was also the person cutting the paths to keep them open, though there seemed sufficient public use to keep the paths worn. He was in the process of restoring a noticeboard that had previously captured the names of people who had contributed to the tree planting. He spoke of [past] bird ringing on the site and receiving advice from local SWT member John Walsh. He offered to produce a bird list of species seen on the site – primarily small passerines although we saw both buzzard and kestrel flying over the site on the visit.

There is an obvious larger Italian Alder which has seemingly sprinkled seeds across much of the site and there is prolific seedling growth. It is a non-native species – and so has less [insect] species associated with it - and has a reputation for a very invasive nature. It may be sensible to seek to fell and remove the large tree and tackle the invasive seedlings early on. You may wish to consider the use of a woody herbicide on the cut material to prevent re-growth [although this is likely to need application by someone with relevant training and skills].

October is not necessarily the best time of the year to judge what wildlife is present. The trustee spoke of many orchid spikes but they had been declining over time. The density of the flora suggests the soil is a little impoverished, with its clayey nature perhaps impeding drainage and root development. However from a second visit and a closer look at the plants the flora has some good examples of chalk loving plants including uncommon ones such as Blue fleabane [*Erigeron acer*] and Yellow-wort [*Blackstonia perfoliata*] and this would fit with the presence of the orchids and suggests valuable grassland. (The yellow flowering plant you saw slightly earlier in the year was probably Common Fleabane [*Pulicaria dysenterica*])

There was some evidence of rabbit grazing but I suspect numbers have declined from what they would have been in the past with the clay nature of the soil not encouraging them. I would guess that butterflies and insect numbers would have been good in the spring and summer when there would also have been many more small birds obvious. There are likely to be reptiles and small mammals across the site which just might include dormice as they are present in some of the nearer woodland

It would be sensible to try and build up records of species present. The offer of help from the Suffolk Naturalist Society is to be welcomed and some more systematic recording of plants, birds and insects through 2021 would be very sensible. [This time of the year might

be good to see what fungi are present and an all year bird list would be good.] The site also needs to be considered as part of the wider complex of Needham Lake Park and the semi-natural land out to the surrounding roads. Your reference to the nearness of the two roadside nature reserve is also sound as the species present there could be on the similar soils here and may find the complex of adjoining habitats to their liking.

Ways forward

In summary there are perhaps four possible directions of travel for future management though I suspect two are not worth serious consideration. As local people have been involved in recent tree planting it will be important to bring them along with you if you wish to make changes. Therefore I suggest some form of careful consultation with local people is important so that their views are incorporated into decisions made and they can be supportive of the direction taken.

The four main options could be summarised as:

1. No interventions
2. Progress towards a predominately wooded site
3. Retain the mix of wood and scrub but seek to retain and expand the open grassland areas
4. Remove significant numbers of trees to have a predominantly open site to favour the chalk grassland

1. **No significant interventions:** The emphasis would solely be on keeping the paths open and allowing the bushes to spread and trees to grow. Over time this would mean the site would become woodland. The boundary hedges, which mainly blend into the adjoining hedges/scrub, would need some attention occasionally especially where they encroached on the paths.

Although this is the simplest option in terms of action on the site, it probably doesn't recognise the value of the mosaic of open and woody areas that has a much higher wildlife value. The occasional open areas are likely to provide more interest for people as well as wildlife and allow more open views across the site.

2. **A Woodland site:** The focus would be on the trees allowing them to continue to mature and manage accordingly. Over time the larger timber trees would come to dominate, shading and over-topping the shrubby/scrubby aspect. This may require occasional attention cutting back the scrub to allow the timber trees the space to grow up through the understorey. The paths would remain but the open areas and views would be lost over time. Seats could remain but would really be rest spots in the wood rather than viewpoints.

In time it would be good to coppice small areas within the wood – minimum size about 6x6m to enable sufficient light to get down to the ground – to retain a stronger understorey and have variable ages of growth. If deer grazing is noticeable

the cut stumps left [stools] would need to be protected by the felled branches to allow the new tree growth to get up and away over the first couple of years.

The wildlife favoured would be woodland species – insects and birds in the main. The coppice areas might allow some flora to come back on a cycle but it would be the under-storey of scrub and coppice that would provide the more important areas for wildlife along with the edges of the wood.

3. **Mosaic of open glades and trees/bushes:** By putting an emphasis on retaining and enhancing the mosaic / patchy nature of the site you would cut back encroaching bramble and bushes on the existing glade like areas which would be regularly 'mown'. You could also remove some of the less suitable recent planting such as the willows and certainly tackle the invasive Italian alder. This would retain them as open glades and allow the interesting flowers to thrive. The glades could be slightly enlarged and linked through the paths. The paths could be widened on a cyclical pattern, especially the ones by hedges, and this would provide corridors for insects and seeds as well as easier walking for people. The open glades created may want some down slope tree felling/ coppicing to create views across the area and these would be good places for simple seats.

The edges of habitats are often the parts getting greatest use by wildlife and the patchy, mosaic nature of the site would maximise this aspect. There would be a regular programme of cutting the open areas and occasionally cutting into the patches of light scrub which would be left to regrow over a few years. Cyclical cutting could also be undertaken along lengths of the hedges creating a variety of ages of re-growth.

Some patches of more developed trees would be left uncut allowing them to progress into woodland and again diversifying the site.

4. **Removing trees for increased grassland:** To favour the chalky grassland, the idea would be to remove much of the young trees and scrub. Initially there would be re-growth requiring regular cutting and probably extensive use of a woody herbicide. The open areas would be expanded out from existing glades and over time pockets could be cut into the denser areas of scrub expanding the potential for grassland.

It would be possible/sensible to retain some areas of trees and allow them to grow into small patches of woodland interspersing the open areas.

Option 1, although needing the least amount of effort, probably brings less value for wildlife and perhaps people. Option 4 will require very significant effort and may not bring large gains as the regrowth from bushes could suppress the grassland. There would also have to be sensitive discussion if large amounts of planted trees are to be removed. This suggests that options 2 and 3 are the ones worth considering.

Our discussion on the day suggested that maybe option 3 would bring the greatest wildlife value and retain much to make it attractive to the community. The occasional nature of the small scale management interventions may also be suitable for a community based group of

volunteers even if some initial work creating larger glades may be aided by more skilled workers / professional contractors.

With suitable volunteer support small scale wildlife boosting can happen on site. Cut branches stacked as areas for insects and small mammals; nest boxes added including an open box on a tall pole that might suit the kestrels; hedgehog and reptile refuges etc. More ideas and options can be found on the SWT website.

Keeping the areas around benches open may dissuade users to leave their rubbish. It does seem that once some is present, people feel less worried about leaving their own rubbish. Occasional visits by volunteers to keep on top of this would be good as the rubbish can provide 'traps' for wildlife as well as being unsightly.

The self-seeding alder is prolific in places. It may be worth some significant work cutting it back to reduce its dominance and, as that could involve the use of herbicides, you may wish to engage a contractor to undertake this work at the beginning. The surrounding bushes may suppress alder growth elsewhere and the cutting of open areas will stop it taking hold there.

Next steps?

To develop a clear set of agreed outcomes for the site and a programme of work to get you there, the creation of a simple site management plan would be very helpful if not essential. Once agreed by the Council this can provide the necessary guidance to channel community enthusiasm, dissuade inappropriate activities and identify when additional resources are needed. SWT's consultancy should be in a position to help with this and may also be able to help with more systematic species records in the spring building on any voluntary work through SNS. The Plan would probably divide the site into a series of zones based on the habitat with clear actions needed over time in each location. It would however be sensible to be ready to review and revise the plans over time as our changing climate and other events may alter the context.

Simon Hooton
Voluntary Conservation Advisor
Suffolk Wildlife Trust



Management Plan Lilley's Wood

Graham Hart SWT May 2022

Aims: to increase chalk grassland for flora balanced with enhancing/controlling scrub and hedgerows and protect habitats of nesting birds and other wildlife

Activity	Area/Method	Timing
Tree management	Selection and removal of the non-native Italian Alder tree and its self-seeded saplings	September – February
	Selection and removal of trees growing on the grassland areas	September – February
	Selection and removal of tree guards	All year round
	Some patches of mature trees over 15-20 years old adjacent to areas of scrub to be left to grow	N/A
Scrub management	Create scrub compartments. Rotational cutting of compartments to encourage maintain a variety of stage of growth.	October to early February. Cut berry producing scrub after December, to leave forage for wildlife.
	• Mature blackthorn/hawthorn scrub	cut on 15 year rotation
	• Bramble scrub	cut on 5 to 6 year rotation
	• Tall herbs	cut on 3 year rotation
	Cut back invading bramble scrub and remove young saplings from areas of open grassland.	September – February
	Select less appropriate footpaths to close and allow scrub to infill to reduce disturbance to wildlife. Consult with user groups beforehand	September – February
Hedgerow management	Straggly hedges to be coppiced or layed. If coppicing cut shoots again at the end of the second winter to thicken the hedge. Aim for 2 to 4m high.	November to early February.
	Use the brash from tree clearance to create dead hedges	October to February
	Allow trees to develop as standards in the hedge at 5-10 metre intervals	
	Leave undisturbed margins along hedge approximately 2m wide	Annual or biennial cut in rotation in August. Remove cuttings, leave in large heaps (habitat)
Grassland management	Maintain existing areas of grassland by cutting and removal of arisings. This will maintain areas of species diverse grassland.	July – September.
Litter picking	Remove any litter along paths and grassland areas	All year round
Record wildlife	On-going survey work and recording to monitor key species and effects of management	All year round

Lilley's Wood

Report to Parish Council – May 2022

On 4 May a meeting was held at Lilley's Wood with interested parties to look at the property and consider practical and appropriate actions to maintain this area for wildlife. We had representatives of Suffolk Wildlife Trust and the RSPB as well as a local entomologist. Hugo Craggs also attended to represent the Parish Council.

During the visit we were all able to listen to a considerable amount of bird song which testified to the value of the current habitat to birds and we viewed areas of chalk grassland that are home to an interesting range of plants which are in danger of being overwhelmed by scrub. The key conclusions were:

- That this is a valuable area with some excellent and quite rare habitats for wildlife
- That it would be very well worthwhile preserving these habitats which, without some element of intervention, will become woodland relatively soon, losing these valuable assets
- That it will be helpful to avoid human activity on the site having too many adverse effects while continuing to enable our community to visit and enjoy the site

Several surveys of the wildlife and habitats have been undertaken by experts in various fields and Graham Hart SWT Conservation Advisor has put forward a management plan.

The key recommendations for action are:

- i. That it would be very beneficial to ~~keep~~ prevent scrub and trees from growing on the small areas of grassland within the site that have some rare plants and are good for bees, butterflies and moths as well as other insects. In particular, these grass areas have many orchids which would be threatened by spreading of brambles and scrub
- ii. That some of the larger trees, particularly those that either sucker or seed prolifically, should be removed to enable the scrub and grassland to continue to flourish
- iii. That the perimeter hedge, that still has spiral guards on the lower stems, should have these protectors removed and laid to provide a much denser foliage at and close to ground level that is valuable for many ground nesting birds and small mammals

The steps that could be taken over the next period are:

1. To use the summer months to remove spiral guards and tree guards where this can be done without disturbance to wildlife, and to cut down some young trees on areas of open grassland where these are easily accessed without disturbance
2. In the winter months:
 - a. to use a small number of working parties to do more bramble and scrub clearance from the limited grassland
 - b. To engage a tree surgeon to cut down any agreed trees
 - c. If we have sufficient financial resource, to engage a professional to undertake some hedge laying

It would be good to assemble a team of perhaps 6 to 8 volunteers to undertake the works. We already have a few. We thought that it might be good to hold an event at the site for a couple of hours while the orchids are in flower which would allow members of our community, including possible volunteers, to come and see the site and understand what we plan to do and what the benefit for wildlife will be. As Hugo has identified, it would be good to provide some simple signage at the site to inform those who visit or pass by.

Joan Hardingham

William Barnes