

**LAND SOUTH - EAST OF
'FOUR WINDS'
EGERTON
KENT
ECOLOGICAL SCOPING SURVEY**

BY

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2nd December 2019

D147. Egerton (TQ909472).R



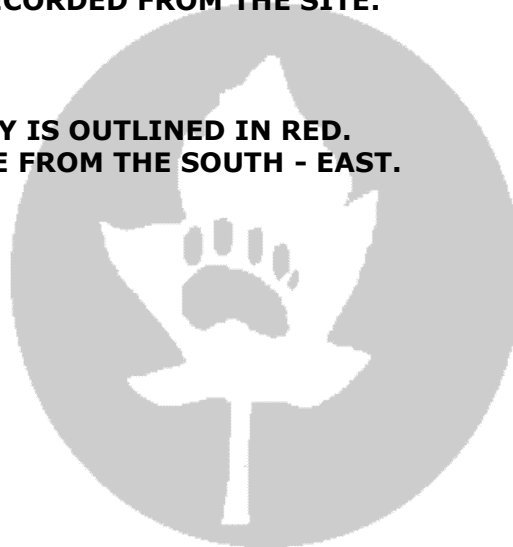
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APPENDIX

1 LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED FROM THE SITE.

FIGURES

- 1 THE SITE BOUNDARY IS OUTLINED IN RED.**
- 2 A VIEW OF THE SITE FROM THE SOUTH - EAST.**



1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** This document was compiled in order to report upon a protected species scoping survey of an area of land south – east of 'Four Winds', New Road, Egerton, Kent¹. The site is rectangular and slopes gently down to the south – west on sandstone – derived soil at 82 metres OD., and is situated on the eastern side of Egerton village.
- 1.2** The **site** basically consists of a large open flat sheep pasture, without any buildings. There is a mixed native – species hedge with a few small trees on the south – western border. The hedge is incomplete and consists largely of hawthorn², with small quantities of blackthorn and wild clematis. The rest of the site is fenced. To the north - west are the gardens and grounds of residential properties, to the north - east is orchard, and to the south – east the neighbouring land is arable farmland. The county road³ is on the south - western border. There is a public footpath that crosses the site from New Road into the orchards. The site is heavily grazed.
- 1.3** There are very few **designated sites** within two kilometres of the survey site, and they are all on the other side of Egerton village. There are several ancient woodlands⁴ of which Foxden Wood, which is situated 580 metres north of the survey site is the largest. It is also a Local Wildlife Site⁵ as are Peebles Cross Pasture, which is 1.27 kilometres west of the survey site, and Lenham Heath and Chilston Park which are 1.16 kilometres north – east.
- 1.4** The site is proposed as a location for future residential development⁶.

¹ OS / TQ909472. Grid reference taken from <http://gridreferencefinder.com/#>

² Probably about 55% of the hedge shrub flora.

³ New Ropad.

⁴ Ancient Woodland is protected by the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2019).

⁵ Hereafter 'LWS'. LWS are protected against development at a local (county) level.

⁶ Anon, 2019.

2.0 METHODS

2.1 The site visit took place on Friday 8th November 2019 and took approximately one hour, during which the whole site was visited. The survey area consisted of the land shown in Figure 1. The purpose of the visit was to carry out ecological scoping surveys as follows:

2.1.1 The plant and animal species of the site were listed by using the variety of inventory methods described by Sutherland (2000) and Beattie and Oliver (1994). Obviously – introduced species of plants were not included in this list.

2.1.2 A search was made for any species, or habitat suitable for any species that are specifically protected for conservation purposes by wildlife legislation⁷ such as badgers, bats and common reptiles, using appropriate established techniques e.g. assessment of potential habitat for reptiles by comparison of the habitat on site with descriptions of potential reptile habitat given by Gent and Gibson (2003) as augmented by previous personal experience.

2.1.3 A search was also made for species⁸ that are included within the short list of the national **Biodiversity Action Plans**^{9 10}, and, for birds, a search was made for species which are included within the red part of the national bird '**Red List**'¹¹ as well as any species that were recorded within the Kent Red Data Book¹², Kent Rare Plant Register¹³ and other similar publications. All results were recorded in Appendix 1.

⁷ Mostly, this included species listed in <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-3408> as being protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and related legislation.

⁸Or habitat suitable for species.

⁹ Biodiversity Steering Group, 1995 as amended. Hereafter known as the 'BAP'.

¹⁰ As amended.

¹¹ Hayhoe et al, 2017.

¹² Waite, 2001. Hereafter referred to as 'KRDB'.

¹³ <http://bsbi.org/kent>.

3.0 RESULTS

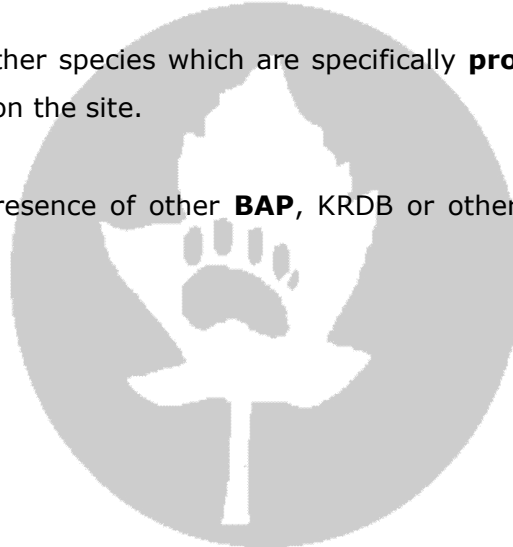
3.1 A total of 30 species of plants and animals were recorded on the site.

3.2 The **plant** list consisted of 19 species, all typical of the dominant Rodwell (1998) MG7 *Lolium perenne* ley grassland which was the predominant vegetation type of the site, albeit that the sward had been modified and eaten down completely to the ground and could only therefore be provisionally identified. The plant list is given in Appendix 1. There were no botanically – interesting areas or plant species in the whole site.

3.3 Three **bird** species were recorded at the site but there was only potential nesting habitat on site in the hedgerow. No notable bird species were recorded.

3.4 No evidence of any other species which are specifically **protected** under wildlife legislation was found on the site.

3.5 No evidence of the presence of other **BAP**, KRDB or other notable species was found on site.



4.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1** Short surveys such as this one are good at giving a sample of the ecological value of a given site and showing which species, if any, require more detailed survey¹⁴.
- 4.2** The **methods** of the survey have been used extensively elsewhere with consistent results and accord with good practice guidelines¹⁵. Signs of protected species and their habitat parameters are reasonably obvious to an experienced surveyor and ecological surveys of this type are valuable in terms of helping to determine whether protected or notable animals or plants are likely to be present, are present, or have been present in or around a site and whether further, more detailed Phase 2 survey is required for certain species. However, the results of a survey are partially determined by the time of year at which the survey takes place, the stages in an organism's life cycle, and the accessibility of the site. At this site, access was complete throughout.
- 4.3** The **plant** list was typical of the flora where grazing, particularly by sheep, has occurred over years and where the sward may have been periodically improved. There were no unusual or uncommon or protected plant species at the site and the habitat type was a common one which is widespread throughout the country¹⁶.
- 4.4** No notable species of **birds** were recorded at the site. However, a few additional species¹⁷ might be expected to occur on or over the site at other times of year. The only potential nesting habitat was in the hedgerow, and therefore this should not be disturbed during the bird breeding period of approximately mid – March to early August inclusive, without first having been subjected to an ornithological screening survey.
- 4.5** Consideration was also given to a wide range of other protected species that might occur on site,

¹⁴ Stork and Samways, 1995.

¹⁵ E.g. Institute of Ecology and Environmental Assessment 2006 (as amended); Hundt, 2012, British Standards Institute, 2013, Collins, 2016.

¹⁶ Rodwell, 1998.

¹⁷ E.g. Greenfinch (*Carduelis chloris*), magpie (*Pica pica*) and blue tit (*Cyanistes caeruleus*).

- The presence of **reptiles** can be ruled out since the site is close - grazed grassland and is therefore unsuitable habitat. Common reptiles are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.
- There were no ponds on site and none within 500 metres of the site¹⁸, and none further afield. As a result, there is unlikely to be a population of **great crested newts**¹⁹ in the area. As a result, there will be no need for further survey; great crested newts are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.
- **Dormouse**²⁰ has been recorded on the other side of Egerton village²¹ but is unlikely to be found in the hedge of the survey area. This is because the hedge lacks variety of potential food and is without significant ground flora. It is also part of an incomplete network of such hedges in the area.
- There were no **badger**²² setts or field signs in the survey site.
- There were no buildings or trees that were suitable for use by roosting **bats**. All bats and their roosts are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

4.6 The proposed development will not directly affect the nearby **designated sites**, as they are generally inaccessible except via public footpaths.

4.7 In **summary**, as a result of the survey, it is clear that there is no potential for protected species at the site, and therefore no impact and no requirement for mitigation. No hedge clearance may take place during the bird nesting season without the site first having been checked by an ecologist. In addition, it is strongly recommended that, in order to provide some overall biodiversity mitigation and to comply with national government guidance²³, some of the wildlife conservation measures suggested by Gunnell, Murphy and Williams (2013) for instance, for the built environment should be incorporated into any proposed Scheme.

¹⁸ There are a few ponds, but all of them coincide with springs and therefore are unlikely to be used by newts. The nearest is 1.3 kilometres away. There are some fishing ponds much closer to the site, but these are well - stocked with a variety of fish species and are also unlikely to harbour newts.

¹⁹ Triturus cristatus.

²⁰ Muscardinus avellanarius.

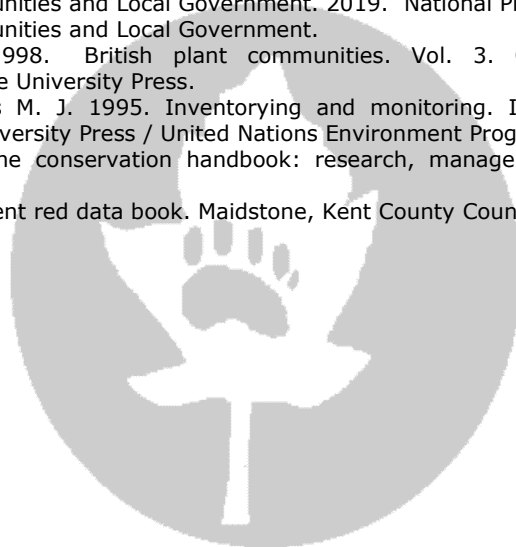
²¹ Anon, verb. comm.

²² Meles meles.

²³ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2019.

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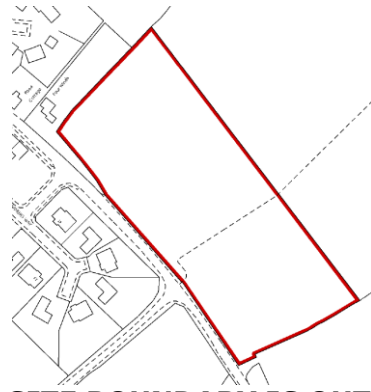


Figure 1: THE SITE BOUNDARY IS OUTLINED IN RED.
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Figure 2: A VIEW OF THE SITE FROM THE SOUTH - EAST.