



Title	Botany assessment of the Grassland Component of Little Barford CWS
Date	01 September 2021
Client	Executors of the Alington Estate
Site	Alington Estate
Author	[REDACTED]
Review	[REDACTED]

Introduction

This note was requested to provide the following:

A written advice note analysing the differences in the core of the CWS (its designation criteria) and the area potentially proposed for residential development on the field between Lower Farm Barns and St Deny's Church.

The report therefore provides the results of the botany survey of the semi-improved neutral grassland field located between Lower Farm Barns and St Deny's Church and designated as part of the Little Barford Country Wildlife Site (CWS).

The survey also covered the small section of accessible wetland habitat adjacent to the river but excluded the wet woodland and adjacent grazed field to the south of the access track to the Church. A plan of the Little Barford CWS is provided in **Annex 1** and the two survey area compartments shown in **Annex 2**, along with a Phase 1 habitat survey plan.

Methods

The fenced grassland field between St Deny's Church and Lower Farm Barns was a single survey compartment. A second smaller compartment adjacent to the river with wetter habitats was also surveyed.

A botany survey of the two survey areas within the CWS was carried out by experienced botanist Sven Wair on 19 June 2021. The survey identified all higher plants within the two survey areas by eye and hand lens and with reference to Stace (2010). Where necessary, specimens were collected and later identified at home using a microscope and with reference to other literature.

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CWS Criteria

The criteria for neutral grasslands taken from Bedfordshire and Luton Local Sites Partnership (2020) are as follows:

c) *Neutral grassland sites supporting good populations of either:*

- *three or more strong neutral grassland indicator species;*
- *eight or more neutral grassland indicator species in total.*

Also, a separate criterion for grassland assemblages:

e) *Sites supporting good populations of more than 50 grassland species.*

Results

The results of the botany survey provided in **Annex 3** demonstrate that the grassland field located between Lower Farm and St Deny's Church supports a neutral grassland assemblage and small area of wet flush.

The total number of grassland species exceeded the 50 species CWS selection threshold for neutral grassland and, at nine neutral grassland indicator species, also met the indicator species selection threshold of eight species. There were no 'strong' neutral grassland indicator species present as listed in the CWS selection guidelines Bedfordshire and Luton Local Sites Partnership (2020). The data suggest that the grassland and flush does not support any rare or notable flora but that the assemblage has remained sufficiently diverse since designation to merit continued CWS status.

The small area of wetland adjacent to the river and within the CWS boundary supported a small area of *Phragmites australis* (common reed) and it and the adjacent wet woodland added to the habitat mosaic and hence is considered to enhance the value of the overall CWS area.

Conclusions

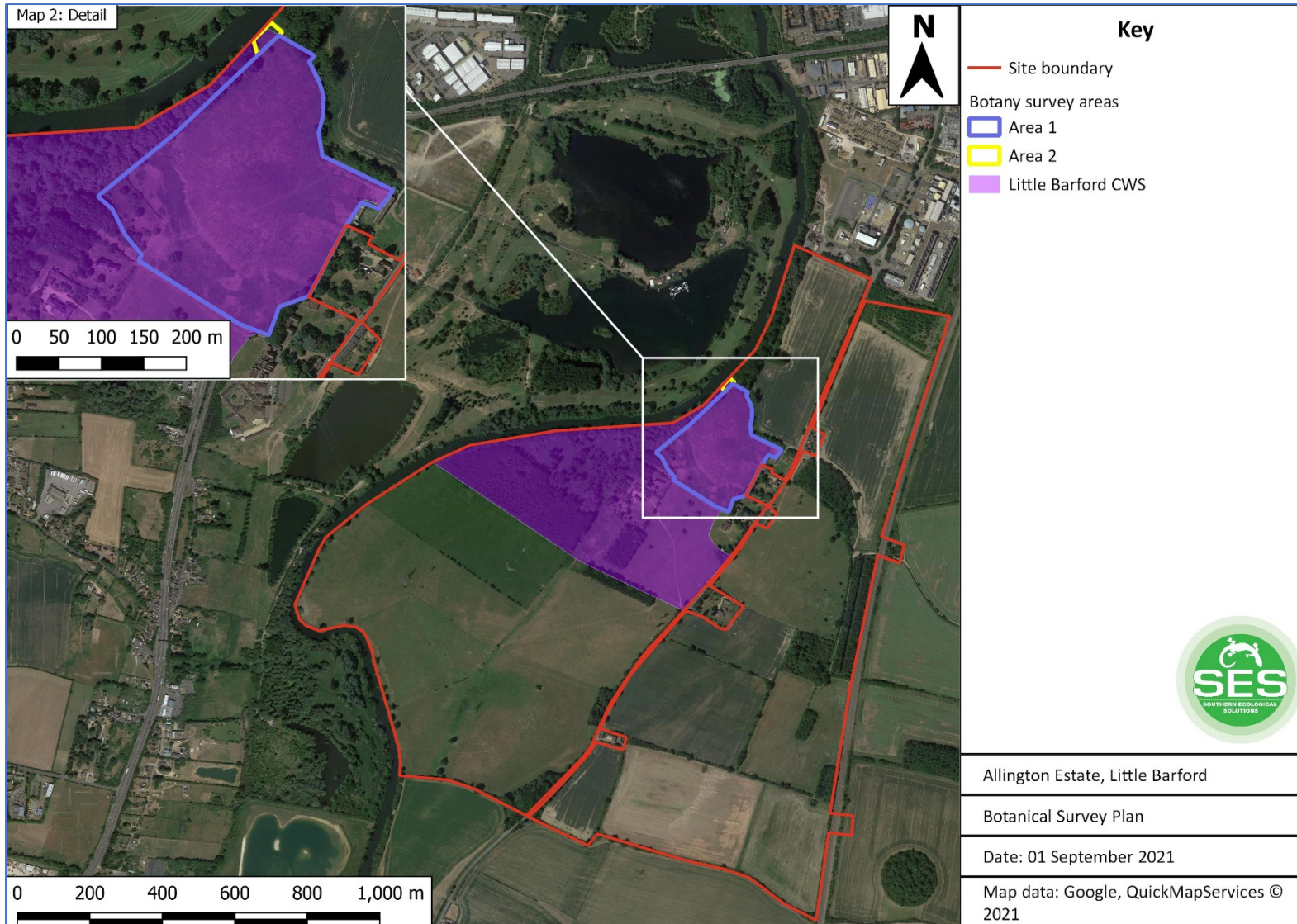
The botany survey of the grassland sections of Little Barford CWS indicates that the grassland meets the CWS selection criteria and hence the designation remains valid. The CWS should be retained and protected in line with local planning policy (Bedford Local Plan 2030). Development provides the opportunity to contribute to and secure the continued management of the CWS, which may over time enhance the grassland habitats through a programme of meadow management.

References

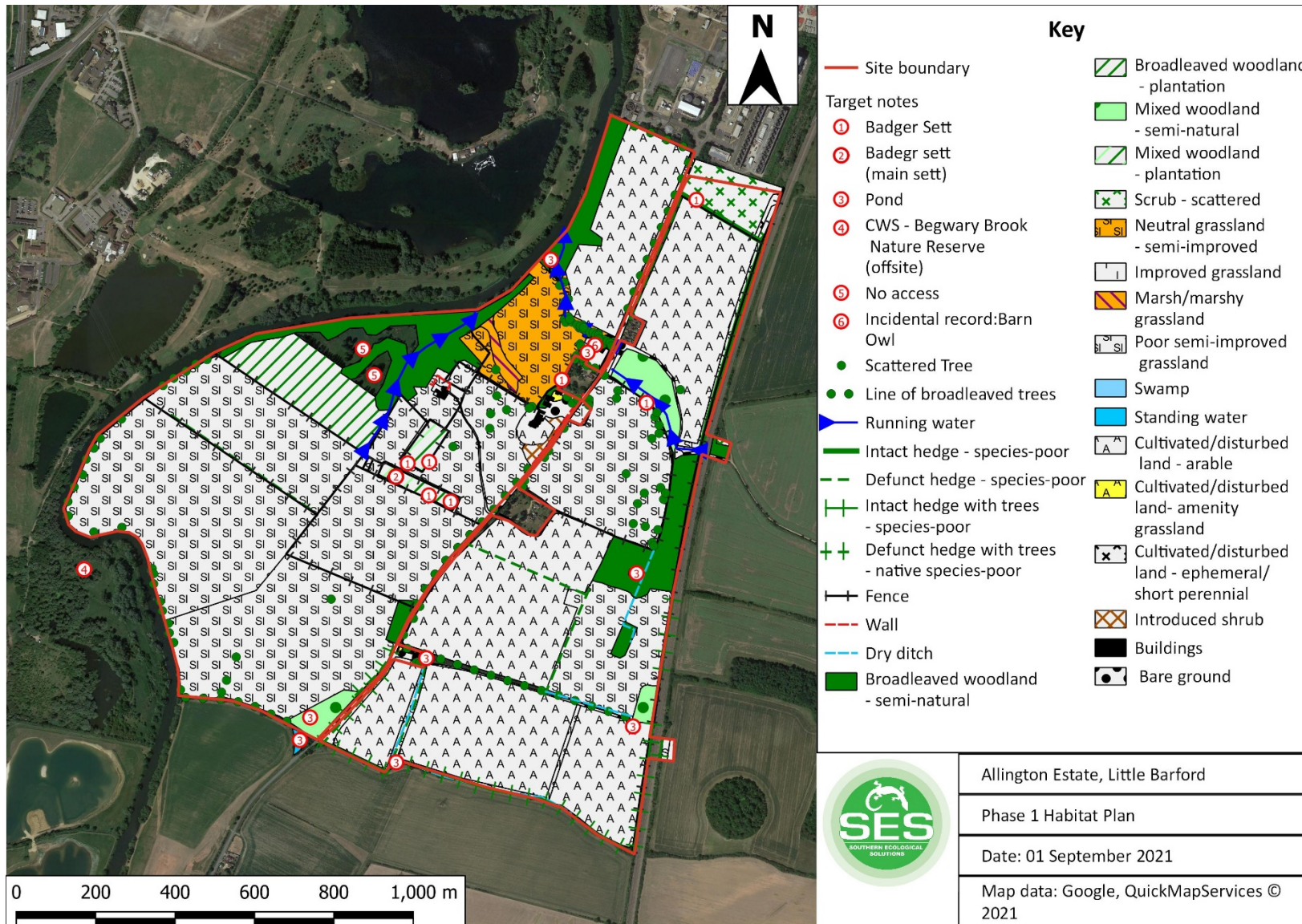
Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030. Online at: <https://www.bedford.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy-its-purpose/local-plan/>

Bedfordshire and Luton Local Sites Partnership (2020). *Bedfordshire and Luton County Wildlife Sites Selection Guidelines, Version 14, December 2020.* Accessed online at: https://www.bedscape.org.uk/BRMC/newsite/index.php?c=sites_cws

Annex 2: Location of Survey Area



Phase 1 habitat plan



Annex 3: Botany Survey June 2021 Results

Taxon	Vernacular	Status	Main Field	Small Area by River	CWS Indicator	Grassland Sp.	Notes
<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	Sycamore	Established	O				
<i>Aesculus carnea</i>	Red Horse-chestnut	Planted	R				
<i>Agrostis capillaris</i>	Common Bent	Native	F			1	
<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>	Meadow Foxtail	Native	F	O		1	
<i>Anagallis arvensis subsp. arvensis</i>	Scarlet Pimpernel	Native	O			1	
<i>Angelica sylvestris</i>	Wild Angelica	Native		F		1	
<i>Anisantha sterilis</i>	Barren Brome	Native	F			1	
<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	Cow Parsley	Native	F			1	
<i>Aphanes arvensis</i>	Parsley-piert	Native	O			1	
<i>Arenaria serpyllifolia</i>	Thyme-leaved Sandwort	Native	F			1	
<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>	False Oat-Grass	Native	A	A		1	
<i>Bromus hordeaceus subsp. hordeaceus</i>	Common Soft-brome	Native	A			1	
<i>Calystegia sepium</i>	Hedge Bindweed	Native		O			
<i>Carduus crispus</i>	Wetted Thistle	Native	O			1	
<i>Carex hirta</i>	Hairy Sedge	Native	F		1	1	
<i>Carex riparia</i>	Greater Pond-sedge	Native		A			
<i>Cerastium fontanum subsp. vulgare</i>	Common Mouse-ear	Native	O			1	
<i>Cerastium glomeratum</i>	Sticky Mouse-ear	Native	F			1	
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Creeping Thistle	Native	F	F		1	
<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	Spear Thistle	Native	O	F		1	
<i>Convolvulus arvensis</i>	Field Bindweed	Native	F			1	
<i>Crataegus heterophylla</i>	Various-leaved Hawthorn	Established		R		1	
<i>Crepis capillaris</i>	Smooth Hawk's-beard	Native	O			1	
<i>Crepis vesicaria</i>	Beaked Hawk's-beard	Native	F			1	
<i>Cynosurus cristatus</i>	Crested Dog's-tail	Native	F			1	
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	Cock's-foot	Native	A	A		1	

Taxon	Vernacular	Status	Main Field	Small Area by River	CWS Indicator	Grassland Sp.	Notes
<i>Dipsacus fullonum</i>	Wild Teasel	Native	O			1	
<i>Epilobium hirsutum</i>	Great Willowherb	Native	O			1	
<i>Festuca rubra subsp. rubra</i>	Red Fescue	Native	A	F		1	
<i>Filago vulgaris</i>	Common Cudweed	Native	O			1	
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	Ash	Native	O	O			
<i>Galium aparine</i>	Cleavers	Native	F			1	
<i>Galium verum</i>	Lady's Bedstraw	Native	F		1	1	
<i>Geranium dissectum</i>	Cut-leaved Crane's-bill	Native	F			1	
<i>Geranium molle</i>	Dove's-foot Crane's-bill	Native	O			1	
<i>Geranium pusillum</i>	Small-flowered Crane's-bill	Native	O			1	
<i>Glechoma hederacea</i>	Ground-ivy	Native	O	A		1	
<i>Helminthotheca echioides</i>	Bristly Oxtongue	Native	O			1	
<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	Hogweed	Native	F			1	
<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire-fog	Native	A	F		1	
<i>Hordeum murinum</i>	Wall Barley	Native	F			1	
<i>Hordeum secalinum</i>	Meadow Barley	Native		O	1	1	
<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>	Cat's-ear	Native	F			1	
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	Holly	Native	O				
<i>Juncus inflexus</i>	Hard Rush	Native	O			1	
<i>Lamium album</i>	White Dead-nettle	Native	O			1	
<i>Lolium perenne</i>	Perennial Rye-grass	Native	A			1	
<i>Luzula sp.</i>	Wood-rush sp.	Native	F		1	1	Either L. campestris or L. multiflora
<i>Medicago lupulina</i>	Black Medick	Native	F			1	
<i>Myosotis arvensis</i>	Field Forget-me-not	Native	O			1	
<i>Ophrys apifera</i>	Bee Orchid	Native	O		1	1	x10 spikes at TL17905691
<i>Phleum pratense</i>	Timothy	Native	O			1	
<i>Phragmites australis</i>	Common Reed	Native		A			

Taxon	Vernacular	Status	Main Field	Small Area by River	CWS Indicator	Grassland Sp.	Notes
<i>Pilosella officinarum</i> subsp. <i>officinarum</i>	Mouse-ear Hawkweed	Native	F		1	1	
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort Plantain	Native	F			1	
<i>Plantago major</i> subsp. <i>intermedia</i>	Greater Plantain	Native	O			1	
<i>Poa annua</i>	Annual Meadow-grass	Native	O			1	
<i>Poa humilis</i>	Spreading Meadow-grass	Native	F			1	
<i>Poa trivialis</i>	Rough Meadow-grass	Native	A			1	
<i>Potentilla anserina</i>	Silverweed	Native	O	F		1	
<i>Potentilla reptans</i>	Creeping Cinquefoil	Native	F			1	
<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	Blackthorn	Native	O				
<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	Meadow Buttercup	Native	O	O		1	
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Creeping Buttercup	Native	F			1	
<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.	Bramble	Native	O				
<i>Rumex acetosa</i>	Common Sorrel	Native	F		1	1	
<i>Rumex crispus</i>	Curled Dock	Native	O			1	
<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	Broad-leaved Dock	Native	O			1	
<i>Sagina procumbens</i>	Procumbent Pearlwort	Native	O			1	
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	Elder	Native	O				
<i>Scorzoneroïdes autumnalis</i>	Autumn Hawkbit	Native	O			1	
<i>Senecio erucifolius</i>	Hoary Ragwort	Native	F		1	1	
<i>Senecio jacobaea</i>	Common Ragwort	Native	O	F		1	
<i>Senecio vulgaris</i>	Groundsel	Native	O			1	
<i>Silene dioica</i>	Red Campion	Native	O			1	
<i>Silene latifolia</i>	White Campion	Native	O			1	
<i>Solanum dulcamara</i>	Bittersweet	Native		F			
<i>Sonchus asper</i>	Prickly Sow-thistle	Native	O				
<i>Stellaria graminea</i>	Lesser Stitchwort	Native	O	F	1	1	
<i>Taraxacum</i> agg.	Dandelion	Native	O			1	
<i>Trifolium dubium</i>	Lesser Trefoil	Native	F			1	

Taxon	Vernacular	Status	Main Field	Small Area by River	CWS Indicator	Grassland Sp.	Notes
<i>Trifolium repens</i>	White Clover	Native	O			1	
<i>Trifolium striatum</i>	Knotted Clover	Native	O			1	
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Common Nettle	Native	F	A			
<i>Verbascum thapsus</i>	Great Mullein	Native	O			1	
<i>Veronica agrestis</i>	Green Field-speedwell	Native	O			1	
<i>Veronica arvensis</i>	Wall Speedwell	Native	O			1	
<i>Veronica chamaedrys</i>	Germander Speedwell	Native	O			1	
Total					9	75	

Annex 4: Site Photographs

1. Access to St Deny's Church	2. Southern section of Little Barford CWS with St Deny's Church beyond	3. Northern section of Little Barford CWS between St Deny's Church and Lower Farm Barns
		