

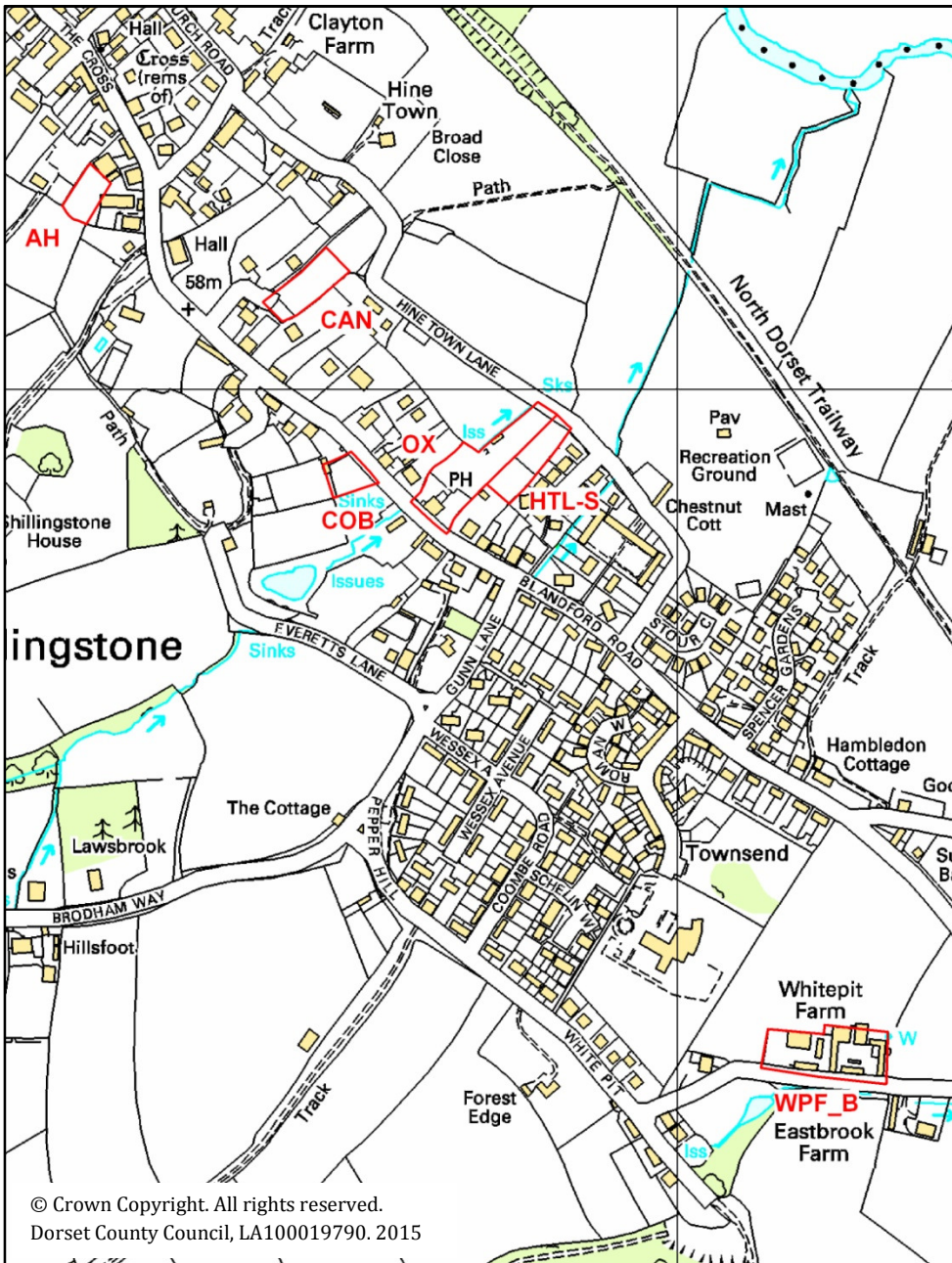
Ecological assessment of potential development sites within Shillingstone Neighbourhood Plan

BACKGROUND

An ecological survey was undertaken of six small areas that have been put forward for development within the Shillingstone Neighbourhood Plan. The sites were visited on 8th October 2015 and assessed from Public footpaths and roadsides. In addition a search was made for Protected Species and Biodiversity Priority (BAP) Species from the DERC database.

The following conclusions relate specifically to the brief supplied at the time of writing, if the proposals should change a re-appraisal or appraisal amendment may be required.

MAP 1. Areas surveyed



SITE DESCRIPTIONS

Site Code: AH; Antell's Yard

Grid Ref.: ST8244 1118

This area comprises largely of hard standing (concrete) with vehicles and port-a-cabins. It is bounded on the western and southern sides by a hedgerow which is formed of overgrown shrubs and small trees and is not regularly managed. Shrubs include Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, Holly *Ilex aquifolium* and Elder *Sambucus nigra*, with small trees of Field Maple *Acer campestre*, Grey Willow *Salix cinerea* and Goat Willow *Salix caprea*. Of particular note are several large clumps of Mistletoe *Viscum album* in the Hawthorn where the footpath enters the field. There were several planted trees of Lawson Cypress *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana*. The hedgerow understorey and ground layer were dominated by Ivy *Hedera helix* with Sting Nettle *Urtica dioica* and Cleavers *Galium aparine*.



Site Code: CAN; Candy's Lane

Grid Ref.: ST8265 1109

A small paddock with an animal shelter and a small area of tall herb vegetation in the south. The grassland had been grazed prior to the survey and topped making assessment difficult. Grasses dominate with Common Bent *Agrostis capillaris*, Perennial Rye-grass *Lolium perenne* and Yorkshire Fog *Holcus lanatus* most prominent. The few herbs include Creeping Buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, White Clover *Trifolium repens*, Cut-leaved Crane's-bill *Geranium dissectum* and Dandelion *Taraxacum* agg. The grassland is best described as semi-improved and species-poor.

The footpath along the western edge is fenced and adjoining this is a hedgerow with a variety of shrubs Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, Dogwood *Cornus sanguineus*, Holly *Ilex aquifolium*, Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, Dog-rose *Rosa canina*, Elder *Sambucus nigra* and English Elm *Ulmus procera*. The understorey is dominated by Ivy *Hedera helix* with Dog's Mercury *Mercurialis perennis* and Herb Robert *Geranium robertianum*; the Dorset Notable Stone Parsley *Sison amomum* noted in grass by the footpath



Site Code: COB; Cobbles

Grid Ref.: ST8268 1091

This was once part of a small field but now the western part has been fenced off and a new driveway put in to the property in the north-west corner. The drive is fenced with new Beech *Fagus sylvatica* hedges planted near the entrance. The remaining grassland was tightly grazed or mown at the time of the survey making assessment difficult, but it appeared grass-dominated with few herbs and is improved or semi-improved species-poor. There are several mature trees along the on the eastern boundary along the main road.



Site Code: OX; The Old Ox

Grid Ref.: ST8282 1093

There are two small areas of grassland here one immediately behind the pub which is short and regularly mown and is essentially a lawn. Beyond this and running north to Hine Town Lane is a small fenced paddock which has not been grazed for some time. The coarse sward is dominated by Yorkshire Fog *Holcus lanatus* and Cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata* with some Perennial Rye-grass *Lolium perenne* and Creeping Bent *Agrostis stolonifera*. Herbs are not particularly diverse with abundant Ribwort Plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, plus Creeping Buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, Meadow Buttercup *Ranunculus acris*, White Clover *Trifolium repens*, Red Clover *Trifolium pratense*, Hogweed *Heracleum sphondylium*, Broad-leaved Dock *Rumex obtusifolius* and Dandelion *Taraxacum* agg. Around the field edges, which are shaded by trees and shrubs, are Stinging Nettle *Urtica dioica*, Cleavers *Galium aparine*, White Dead-nettle *Lamium album* and Ground Ivy *Glechoma hederacea*. The grassland is best described as semi-improved and species-poor.

On both side of the paddock are tall over-grown hedgerows. Hazel *Corylus avellana* is abundant with Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, Elder *Sambucus nigra* and Grey Willow *Salix cinerea*. The ground flora has abundant Ivy *Hedera helix* with Hart's-tongue Fern *Asplenium scolopendrium*, Soft Shield-fern *Polystichum setiferum*, Red Campion *Silene dioica*, Herb Robert *Geranium robertianum*, Cleavers and Cuckoo Pint *Arum maculatum*.



Site Code: HTL-S; Hine Town Lane South

Grid Ref.: ST8286 1093

This appears to be a field that has now been turned into a garden with various planted ornamental trees and shrubs and a tightly mown species-poor grassland. The most important feature of the area is the western hedgerow that adjoins the previous site and is described above.



Site Code: WPF-B; Whitepit Farm

Grid Ref.: ST8314 1037

A large farm now largely abandoned comprising buildings with associated hard standing (mainly concrete) with many piles of rubble and old dung heaps. The sparse vegetation largely comprises ruderal weeds plus some Elder *Sambucus nigra* bushes and a few small Ash *Fraxinus excelsior* trees.

Some of the brick buildings in the east and along the roadside have retained their tiled roofs and would provide suitable habitat for bats, and bats have been recorded in the past (see below).



SUMMARY

There is very little habitat of high ecological importance in any of the five areas surveyed. The grasslands are either improved or semi-improved and species-poor with very few herbs apart from common species.

The main interest is in the old hedgerows associated with the small fields between the houses and Hine Town Lane, found within sites OX and HTL-S. However, because some of these are domestic properties the **Hedgerow Regulations (1997)** may not apply the exception being the 75m hedge on the north-west side of the field at OX. This hedge clearly separates two fields and does not directly border the gardens, therefore the Regulations may apply here. The hedgerows have mature overgrown shrubs and small trees with a good ground layer including ferns.

The old farm buildings at Whitepit Farm that have retained their roof provide suitable habitat for bats and there is a **2007 record of 6 Brown Long-eared Bats *Plecotus auritus*** from here. Therefore a bat survey would be required before any work is carried out in the vicinity of the buildings.

MAP 2. Habitat map for AH, CAN, COB, OX & HTL-S

