

**AN ECOLOGICAL SURVEY**  
*of*  
**LAND AT ENMORE GREEN,**  
**SHAFTESBURY**  
**[SHAF04]**

*for*  
**Dorset Council**

**March 2022**

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Version control			
1	Report prepared by:	Bryan Edwards	27/01/22
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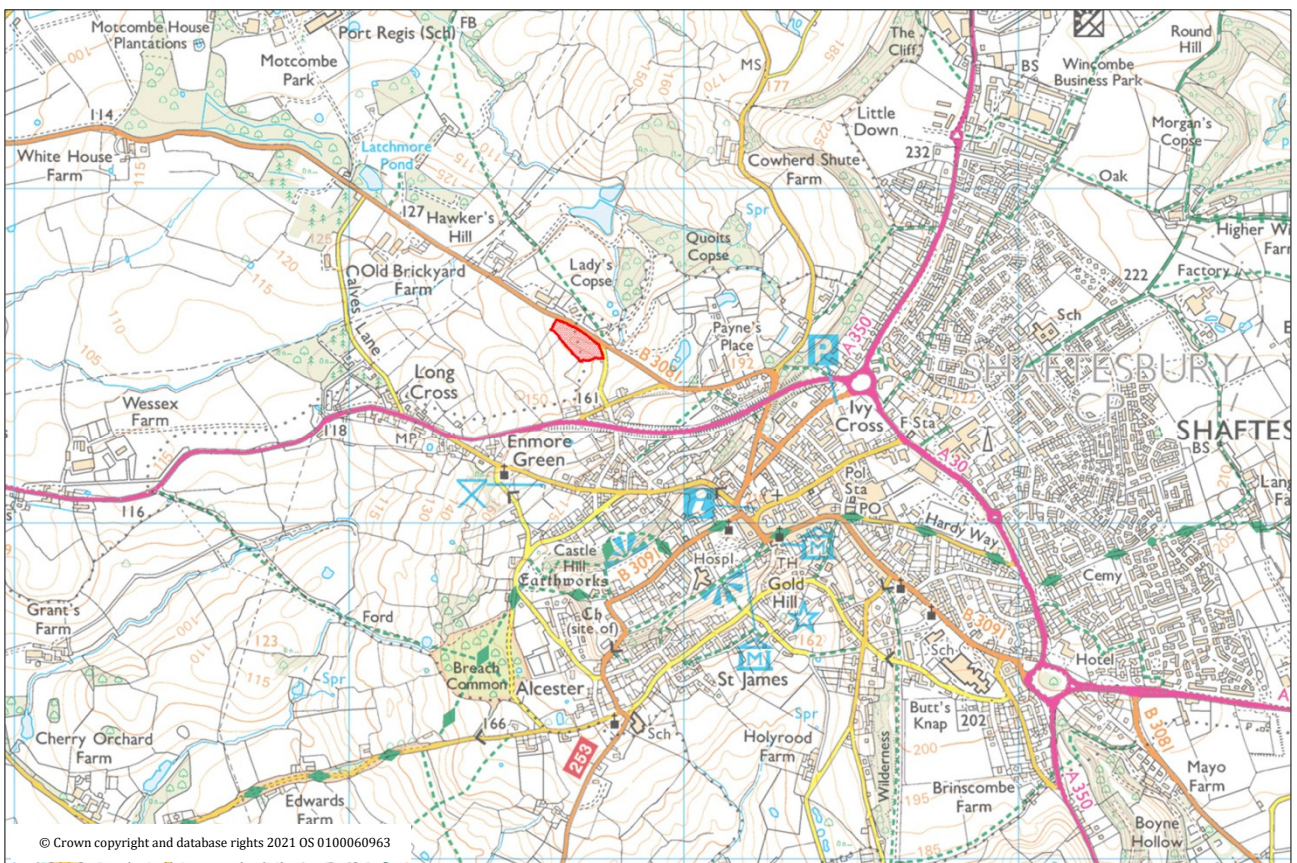
## SUMMARY

- This report forms part of a suite of ecological surveys commissioned by Dorset Council's Strategic Planning and Natural Environment Teams. Together the survey reports form part of the evidence base for the Local Plan, containing extended Phase 1 survey information for the potential allocated sites, highlighting important habitats and the likelihood of protected species being present.
  
- The majority of the field is semi-improved and species-poor and is currently of **Low Ecological Importance**.
  
- The steep bank on the northeast side sloping down to the Motcombe road is slightly more diverse and is of **Moderate Ecological Importance**.
  
- There are **393 metres** of hedgerow that qualifies as **Hedgerows Priority Habitat** and **Section 41 Habitat of Principal Importance**.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report forms part of a suite of ecological surveys commissioned by Dorset Council's Strategic Planning and Natural Environment Teams. Together the survey reports form part of the evidence base for the Local Plan, containing extended Phase 1 survey information for the potential allocated sites, highlighting important habitats and the likelihood of protected species being present. The surveys have been carried out by Dorset Environmental Records Centre who are working with Dorset Council to ensure that ecological data for the Local Plan process is as up-to-date as possible.

### MAP 1 Location of site



## 2.0 METHODS

The survey was undertaken on the 11<sup>th</sup> November 2021 in overcast weather. The area was walked and a plant species list compiled with frequencies assigned to each species using the DAFOR scale<sup>1</sup>. Particular attention was paid to the presence of any Section 41 or Red Listed species, and any that are on the Dorset Environmental Records Centre (DERC) lists of Dorset Notable species (DERC, 2012). Habitats present were assessed for their potential to support protected species (see Section 6.1), and visible signs for Badger such as setts, latrines and paths were looked for. Each habitat type present and any species or features of particular note were described using target notes (see Section 5.2.2).

A habitat map was produced in the field by drawing boundaries of the different vegetation types over a print out of the latest aerial photograph. This was then digitized using DERCs Integrated Habitat System (IHS) mapping process.

The sites are assessed for their ecological interest at the time of the survey (see Section 6.0). Those sites assessed as being of **Low Ecological Interest** have very little interest and are generally improved grasslands or arable fields. Those of **Moderate Ecological Interest** may support some interest such as one or more Dorset Notable plant species, but do not qualify as a Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI). Those of **High Ecological Interest** are of SNCI quality and are therefore an important wildlife site within a county context.

Nomenclature for plants follows Stace (2019).

<sup>1</sup> The DAFOR scale records species according their abundance as follows:

**D** = Dominant; **A** = Abundant; **F** = Frequent; **O** = Occasional; **R** = Rare; **L** = Local (e.g. **LF** = Locally Frequent)

### 3.0 LEGISLATION & POLICY

#### 3.1 LEGISLATION

The following legislation may be of relevance to the proposed works. Full details of statutory obligations with respect to biodiversity and the planning system can be found in DCLG Circular 06/2005.

- **The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendments) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019:**

This transposes the EU Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) into domestic law and ensures that the habitat and species protection and standards will continue to apply upon the UK's exit from the EU. The Regulations provide protection for a number of species including:

- All species of bat
- Dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*)
- Great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*).

This legislation makes it an offence to deliberately capture, kill or injure individuals of these species listed on Schedule 2 and damage or destroy their breeding site or place of shelter. It is also illegal to deliberately disturb these species in such a way as to be likely to significantly affect: (i) the ability of any significant group of the species to survive, breed or rear or nurture their young; or (ii) the local distribution or abundance of the species.

This legal protection means that where development has the potential to impact on bats, or other species of national interest, the results of a protected species survey must be submitted with a planning application.

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are also protected under this legislation. These are a network of sites designated for supporting habitats or species of high nature conservation importance in the European context. Any activity that has a detrimental effect on these European sites<sup>3</sup> is made an offence under the Regulations. Where a development is likely to have a significant impact on a European site, the Regulations require a rigorous assessment of the impacts, known as an Appropriate Assessment.

- **The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and amendments):**

Protected fauna and flora are listed under Schedules 1, 5 & 8 of the Act. Species likely to be of relevance include:

- All species of **bat**. It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb any bat whilst it is occupying a roost or to intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost
- All species of **British reptile** (in particular grass snake (*Natrix helvetica*), common lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*), adder (*Vipera berus*) and slow-worm (*Anguis fragilis*)). It is illegal to kill or injure these species
- **Great crested newt**. It is illegal to obstruct access to any structure or place which great crested newts use for shelter or protection or to disturb any great crested newt while it is using such a place.

This Act also makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or to take, damage or destroy their eggs and nests (whilst in use or being built). In addition, it is an offence to disturb any nesting bird listed on Schedule 1 or their young.



Schedule 9 of the Act lists those species for which it is an offence to plant or cause their spread. Species listed under Schedule 9 that are most likely to be encountered are Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) and giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*).

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are also protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. These are a network of sites identified as being of national nature conservation importance and hence afforded legal protection.

National Nature Reserves (NNRs) are also protected under the Act (section 35 (1)) and established under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. These are nature reserves which are considered to be of national importance by the relevant statutory bodies i.e. Natural England, Natural resource Wales.

- **Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006:**

This Act enforces a duty on the planning authority and local council to conserve biodiversity (section 40). Additionally, section 41 encourages the local councils to be aware of the species and habitats of 'principal importance' and to act accordingly to protect and manage these habitats and species.

- **The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000:**

This Act strengthens nature conservation and wildlife protection through a number of mechanisms. It places a duty on Government Ministers and Departments to conserve biological diversity, provides police with stronger powers relating to wildlife crimes, and improves protection and management of SSSIs.

- **The Protection of Badgers Act 1992:**

This Act makes it an offence to wilfully take, injure or kill a badger (*Meles meles*); cruelly mistreat a badger; interfere with badger setts, sell or possess a live badger; mark or ring a badger. A licence is required for work affecting badgers and their setts.

- **Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996:**

This Act provides protection for all wild animals from intentional acts of cruelty.

- **Hedgerow Regulations 1997:**

These Regulations establish a set of criteria for assessing the importance of hedgerows. Where a hedgerow is deemed to be 'important' its removal is prohibited without consent from the local Planning Authority.

## 3.2 POLICY

The following policy is of relevance to this report:

- **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):**

This sets out the Government's vision for biodiversity in England with the broad aim that planning, construction, development and regeneration should maintain and enhance, restore or add to biodiversity and geological conservation interests. NPPF (2018) includes sections on legally protected species and sites (see Section 2.1).

- **Local Sites (including Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI), Local Nature Reserves (LNR), and Biological Notification Sites (BNSs)/County Wildlife Sites (CWSs)):**

These are a network of sites designated for their nature conservation importance in a local context. Although they are not afforded legal protection they contribute towards local and national biodiversity.

- **Natural England Protected Species Standing Advice:**

The standing advice is used by local authorities as a fall-back position when in pre-application consultation or during the determination period to define habitat and species survey efforts and mitigation proposals.



## 4.0 EXISTING DATA

The following summary is based on the desk study carried out by DERC for Dorset Council covering the Local Plan Emerging Site Allocations (DERC 2020). The species records are based on post-2010 data.

This field formed part of an Ecological Assessment in 2018 (Edwards, 2018) commissioned by the Natural Environment Team in conjunction with a proposed road scheme. Surveys of Protected species such as Dormouse, Bats and Reptiles were undertaken.

### 4.1 PROTECTED SPECIES

Species	Status	Distance from site
Badger	WCA	Within 1-km radius
Bats	EPS; WCA	Within 1-km radius
Dormouse	S41; EPS; WCA	-
Otter	EPS; WCA	Within 100m radius
Water Vole	S41; WCA	-
Brown Hare	S41	-
Hedgehog	S41	Within 1-km radius
Great Crested Newt	EPS; S41	Within 1-km radius
Reptiles	S41; WCA	-

### 4.2 PROTECTED HABITATS

None adjacent to the site.

**Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland** – Section 41; UK Priority Habitat 135 metres to the northeast

**Lowland Meadows** – Section 41; UK Priority Habitat 230 metres to the southwest

**Purple Moor-grass & rush-pasture** – Section 41; UK Priority Habitat 265 metres to the southwest

### 4.3 PROTECTED SITES

None adjacent to the site.

**Breach Fields** Site of Special Scientific Interest 570 metres to the southwest

## 5.0 RESULTS

### 5.1 SITE DESCRIPTION

The site lies on the western side of Shaftesbury, north of Enmore Green, adjoining the B3081. It occupies 0.93 hectares and comprises a single field which slopes to the northwest with a steep bank sloping to the northeast down to the Motcombe road. The underlying geology is Gault which produces a seasonally wet clayey soil. The field had been grazed by sheep prior to the survey.

### 5.2 HABITAT DESCRIPTION

#### *Grassland*

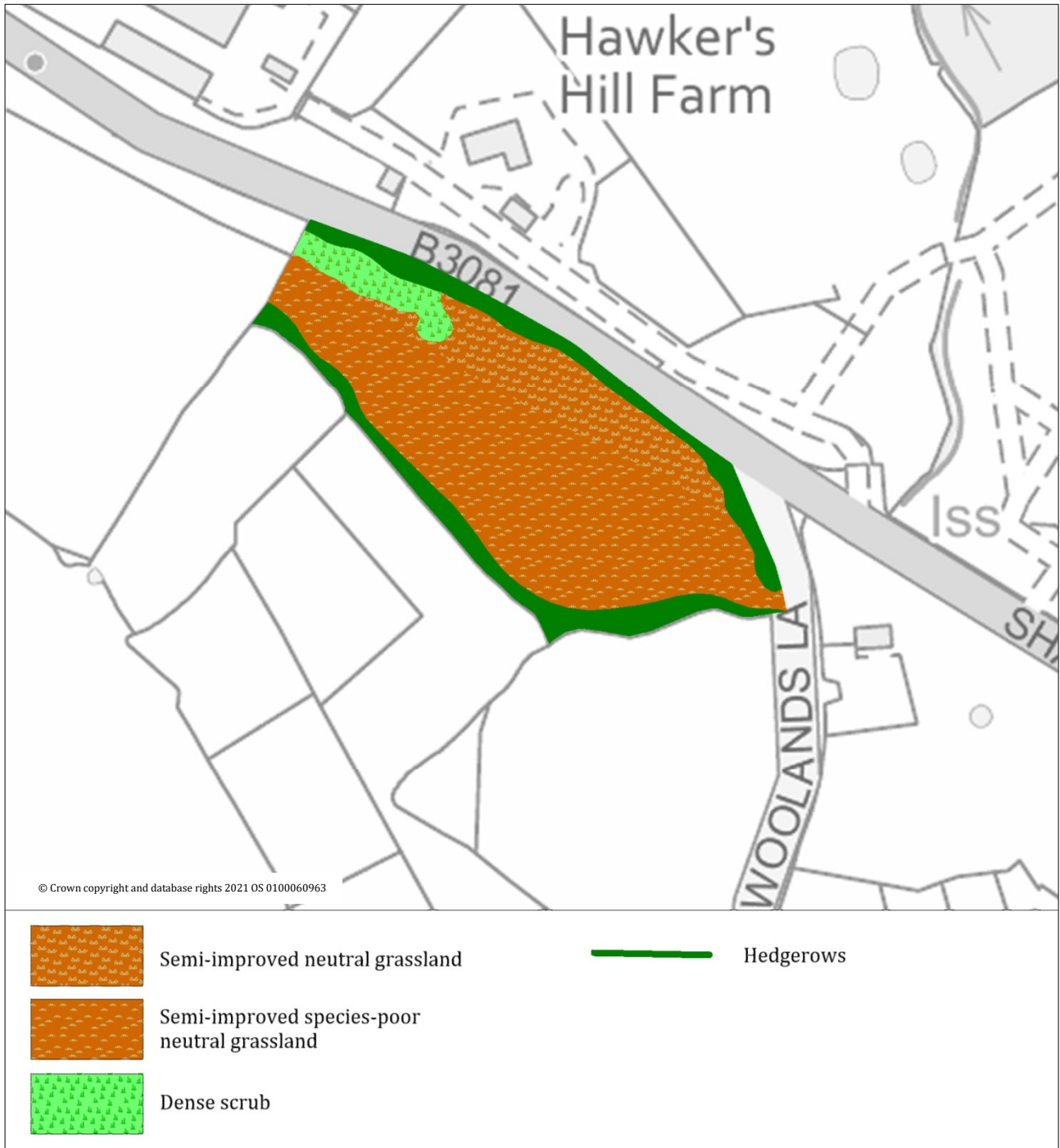
Most of this field is semi-improved and species-poor, the sward comprising Yorkshire Fog *Holcus lanatus*, Common Bent *Agrostis capillaris*, Creeping Bent *Agrostis stolonifera*, Cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata* and Perennial Rye-grass *Lolium perenne*, with smaller quantities False Oat-grass *Arrhenatherum elatius* at the edges. There is a poor diversity of herbs with Creeping Buttercup *Ranunculus repens* abundant and White Clover *Trifolium repens* locally frequent, plus patches of Broad-leaved Dock *Rumex obtusifolius*, Curled Dock *Rumex crispus* and Creeping Thistle *Cirsium arvense*. Other species noted include Common Sorrel *Rumex acetosa*, Hogweed *Heracleum sphondylium* and Autumn Hawkbit *Scorzoneroides autumnalis*.

Along the northeast edge above the road is a steep bank with a coarse sward of abundant Cock's-foot with Yorkshire Fog, False Oat-grass, plus Sweet Vernal Grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum* and Red Fescue *Festuca rubra*. At the eastern end there are stands of Hogweed and Creeping Thistle. Further west it is slightly more diverse with Common Sorrel, Meadow Vetchling *Lathyrus pratensis* and Common Cat's-ear *Hypochaeris radicata*. The Dorset Notable Pignut *Conopodium majus* was noted as frequent here in the 2018 survey.

#### *Hedgerows*

The hedges are quite tall and generally not trimmed with a diversity of woody species including Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, Hazel *Corylus avellana*, Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, Grey Willow *Salix cinerea* and Elder *Sambucus nigra*. There is a large mature Pedunculate Oak *Quercus robur* in the hedgerow in the west of the site. The ground layer has locally abundant Ivy *Hedera helix*, plus Ground Ivy *Glechoma hederacea*, Red Champion *Silene dioica*, Wood Avens *Geum urbanum* and False Brome *Brachypodium sylvaticum*, plus species of enriched ground such as Cleavers *Galium aparine* and Stinging Nettle *Urtica dioica*.

### 5.2.1 Habitat map



## 5.2.2 Target notes



No.	Grid Ref	Target Note
01	ST8568 2353	Main part of field, the top and slope to the southwest has a semi-improved and species-poor sward of Yorkshire Fog, Common Bent, Creeping Bent, Cock's-foot and Perennial Rye-grass. Herbs are largely restricted to Creeping Buttercup with smaller quantities of White Clover and Common Sorrel, plus weed species such as Broad-leaved Dock and Creeping Thistle.
02	ST8569 2355	Steep bank sloping down to road hedge which has a slightly more diverse flora including Meadow Vetchling and Common Cat's-ear. It is becoming invaded by Blackthorn and Bramble, especially at the northern end.
03	ST8569 2357	Road hedge with Blackthorn, Hawthorn, Hazel and Ash. The ground layer has abundant Ivy and patches of Ground Elder, plus Cleavers, Stinging Nettle, Ground Ivy, Red Campion and several clumps of Hart's-tongue Fern.

No.	Grid Ref	Target Note
04	ST8563 2359	Scrub encroaching on the bank with dense Bramble plus Hawthorn and Blackthorn and several small Ash trees.
05	ST8561 2357	Large mature Oak in hedgerow with a 4 metre girth and several features of veteran trees.
06	ST8566 2351	Southern hedge, wide, overgrown and dominated over large lengths by Hazel with small quantities of Blackthorn, Grey Willow and three Pedunculate Oak trees. The shaded ground flora has abundant Ivy, with Ground Ivy, Red Campion, Wood Avens, Cleavers and False Brome. In places along the field margin there are stands of dense Bramble.
07	ST8571 2349	East part of southern hedge has more gaps with Grey willow and Elder. A wide band of Bramble scrub is developing along the field margin.

## 6.0 ASSESSMENT

The majority of the field is semi-improved and species-poor and is currently of **Low Ecological Importance**, but the steep bank on the northeast side sloping down to the Motcombe road is slightly more diverse and is of **Moderate Ecological Importance**. There are **393 metres** of hedgerow that qualifies as **Hedgerows Priority Habitat** and **Section 41 Habitat of Principal Importance**.

### 6.1 PROTECTED SPECIES ASSESSMENT

Species	Status	Habitat Potential	Future surveys
Badger	WCA	No latrines or setts seen on site. Several mammal tracks noted through the hedgerows.	
Bats	EPS; WCA	The hedgerows are tall and there are several mature trees which provide suitable flight lines and foraging habitat for bats.	Surveyed for in 2018
Dormouse	S41; EPS; WCA	Hazel is abundant in the southern hedge and therefore could support Dormouse. The nearest DERC record (2005) is 2.8 km to the southeast.	Surveyed for in 2018
Otter	EPS; WCA	No suitable habitat present on the site.	
Water Vole	S41; WCA	No suitable habitat present on the site.	
Brown Hare	S41	Suitable habitat present, not seen during the survey. The nearest DERC records (2014) are 5.5 km to the west.	
Hedgehog	S41	The wide hedgerows and scrubby margins are suitable for this species.	
Great Crested Newt	EPS; S41	No suitable habitat present on the site.	
Reptiles	S41; WCA	Habitat is generally sub-optimal for reptiles, with Slow Worm the most likely to be present.	

## REFERENCES

**DERC 2012** *Dorset Notable Species Lists*. Dorset Environmental Records Centre, Dorchester

**Edwards, B. 2018** *An assessment of hedgerows, grasslands and significant trees, Enmore Green, Shaftesbury*. Unpublished report by Dorset Environmental Records Centre to Natural Environment Team, Dorset County Council.

**Stace, C.A. 2019** *New Flora of the British Isles* (4<sup>th</sup> Ed). C & M Floristics, Suffolk.



## APPENDIX I: Plant species recorded

Latin Name	Common Name	Status	Frequency <sup>1</sup>
<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	Sycamore		R
<i>Aegopodium podagraria</i>	Ground Elder		R-LF
<i>Agrostis capillaris</i>	Common Bent		O-LA
<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>	Creeping Bent		A
<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>	Meadow Foxtail		O
<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>	False Oat-grass		O
<i>Asplenium scolopendrium</i>	Hart's-tongue Fern		R
<i>Brachypodium sylvaticum</i>	False Brome		R
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Creeping Thistle		O
<b><i>Conopodium majus</i><sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Pignut</b>	<b>DN: NG</b>	<b>R-LF</b>
<i>Corylus avellana</i>	Hazel		O-LA
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn		O
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	Cock's-foot		F-LA
<i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i>	Tufted Hair-grass		R
<i>Dryopteris dilatata</i>	Broad Buckler-fern		R
<i>Equisetum telmateia</i>	Great Horsetail		R
<i>Festuca rubra</i>	Red Fescue		R-LA
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	Ash		O
<i>Galium aparine</i>	Cleavers		O-LF
<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	Herb Robert		R-O
<i>Geum urbanum</i>	Wood Avens		R
<i>Glechoma hederacea</i>	Ground Ivy		LF
<i>Gnaphalium uliginosum</i>	Marsh Cudweed		R
<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	Hogweed		O-LF
<i>Hedera helix</i>	Ivy		O-LA
<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire Fog		A
<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>	Common Cat's-ear		R
<i>Juncus effusus</i>	Soft Rush		R
<i>Lathyrus pratensis</i>	Meadow Vetchling		R
<i>Lepidium didymus</i>	Lesser Swine-cress		R
<i>Lolium perenne</i>	Perennial Rye-grass		O
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort Plantain		R
<i>Plantago major</i>	Greater Plantain		R
<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	Blackthorn		O-LF
<i>Quercus robur</i>	Pedunculate Oak		R
<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	Meadow Buttercup		F
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Creeping Buttercup		F
<i>Rosa canina</i>	Dog Rose		R
<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.	Bramble		O-LA
<i>Rumex acetosa</i>	Common Sorrel		O
<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	Broad-leaved Dock		F

Latin Name	Common Name	Status	Frequency <sup>1</sup>
<i>Salix cinerea</i>	Grey Willow		R
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	Elder		R
<i>Scorzoneroides autumnalis</i>	Autumn Hawkbit		O
<i>Silene dioica</i>	Red Campion		R
<i>Taraxacum officinale</i> agg.	Dandelion		O
<i>Tripleurospermum inodorum</i>	Scentless Mayweed		R-LF
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Stinging Nettle		O-LA

<sup>1</sup> **D** = Dominant; **A** = Abundant; **F** = Frequent; **O** = Occasional; **R** = Rare; **L** = Local (e.g. **LF** = Locally Frequent)

<sup>2</sup> found during 2018 survey

## APPENDIX II: Photographs



**FIG 1.** General view looking northwest across the field.



**FIG 2.** North end of bank sloping down to the Motcombe Road. The grassland on the slope is slightly more diverse, but scrub is encroaching at the northern end.





**FIG 3.** Mature Oak trees in the southern hedge at the northern end. The right hand tree has a 4 metre girth and has several features of veteran trees.



**FIG 4.** Looking southeast along the southern hedge from the western end showing patches of Bramble along the field margin.