

AN ECOLOGICAL SURVEY

of

**LAND NORTH OF
WIMBORNE ROAD**

[WMC08]

for

Dorset Council

December 2021

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Dorset Environmental Records Centre



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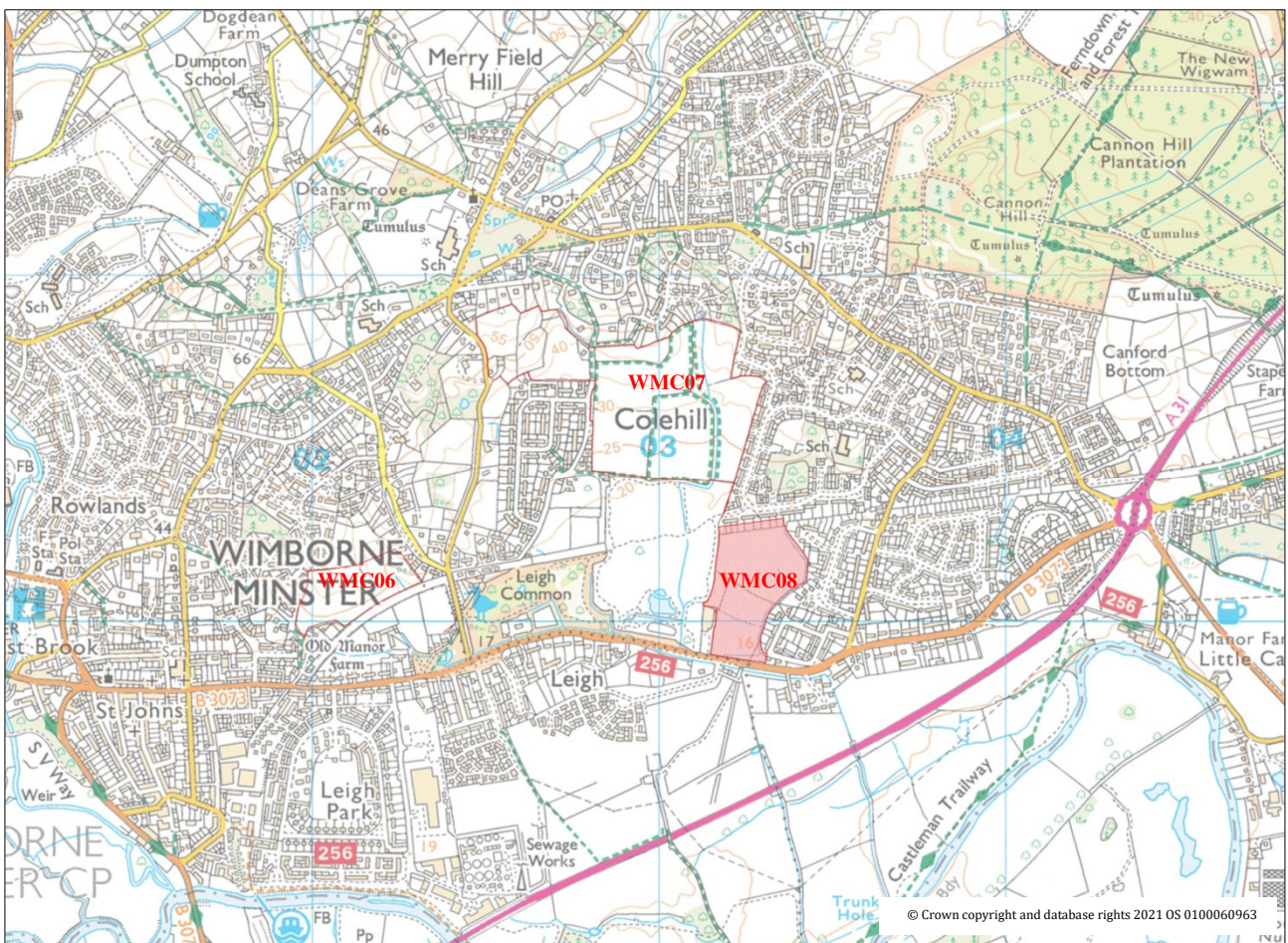
SUMMARY

- 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 three fields, at the time of the survey, were cultivated with maize and therefore assessed as being of **Low Ecological Importance**. However, the presence of scattered Dorset Notable plant species including Tormentil, Trailing Tormentil, Common Knapweed and Devil's-Scabious suggests that little-improved or unimproved grassland was present on some parts of the site until recently.
- There several lengths of old hedgerow totalling **443 metres** 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 14th September 2021 in overcast weather. The area was walked and a plant species list compiled with frequencies assigned to each species using the DAFOR scale¹. 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).

¹The 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 sites³ 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.

4.1 PROTECTED SPECIES

Species	Status	Distance from site
Badger	WCA	Within 100m 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	-
Great Crested Newt	EPS; S41	-
Reptiles	S41; WCA	-

4.2 PROTECTED HABITATS

None adjacent to the site.

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland – Section 41; UK Priority Habitat	270 metres to the west
Purple Moor-grass & Rush-pasture – Section 41; UK Priority Habitat	350 metres to the west
Wet Woodland – Section 41; UK Priority Habitat	420 metres to the southwest
Lowland Meadows – Section 41; UK Priority Habitat	720 metres to the southwest

4.3 PROTECTED SITES

None adjacent to the site.

Dorset Heaths Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	2,900 metres to the east
Dorset Heathlands Special Protection Area (SPA)	2,900 metres to the east
Ferndown Common Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	2,900 metres to the east
Dorset Heathlands RAMSAR	3,180 metres to the northeast

5.0 RESULTS

5.1 SITE DESCRIPTION

The site lies on the north side of Wimborne Road on the southern edge of Colehill. The three fields are flat and overlie the London Clay Formation with superficial deposits of River Terrace Gravels, resulting in a clayey soil with areas that are seasonally wet. At the time of the survey the three fields were maize crop.

5.2 HABITAT DESCRIPTION

Fields

The three fields had a mature maize crop which was very patchy in its coverage with some large areas of sparse crop or bare ground, several areas looked as if they are flooded during the winter. The bare ground and edges of the crops support a range of ruderal species including Fat Hen *Chenopodium album*, Chickweed *Stellaria media*, Pale Persicaria *Persicaria lapathifolia*, Redshank *Persicaria maculosa*, Knotgrass *Polygonum aviculare*, Scentless Mayweed *Tripleurospermum inodorum*, with smaller quantities of Many-seeded Goosefoot *Chenopodium polyspermum*, Black Nightshade *Solanum nigrum* and Prickly Sow-thistle *Sonchus asper*. There are also patches of weeds such as Creeping Thistle *Cirsium arvense*, Broad-leaved Dock *Rumex obtusifolius*, Curled Dock *Rumex crispus* and Stinging Nettle *Urtica dioica*. The winter wet areas have Water Pepper *Persicaria hydropiper*, Marsh Cudweed *Gnaphalium uliginosum*, Toad Rush *Juncus bufonius* and Lesser Spearwort *Ranunculus flammula*.

In places there are very small and fragmented remnants of the grassland that was formerly present. Grasses include Common Bent *Agrostis capillaris*, Velvet Bent *Agrostis canina* and Red Fescue *Festuca rubra*. Herbs include Marsh Bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus pedunculatus*, Tufted Vetch *Vicia cracca*, Common Sorrel *Rumex acetosa*, Lesser Stitchwort *Stellaria graminea*, Trailing Tormentil *Potentilla anglica**, Common Knapweed *Centaurea nigra** and Devil's-bit Scabious *Succisa pratensis**. The presence of these species, which includes three Dorset Notables, suggests there was some little-improved or unimproved grassland present on the site.

Hedgerows / Line of trees

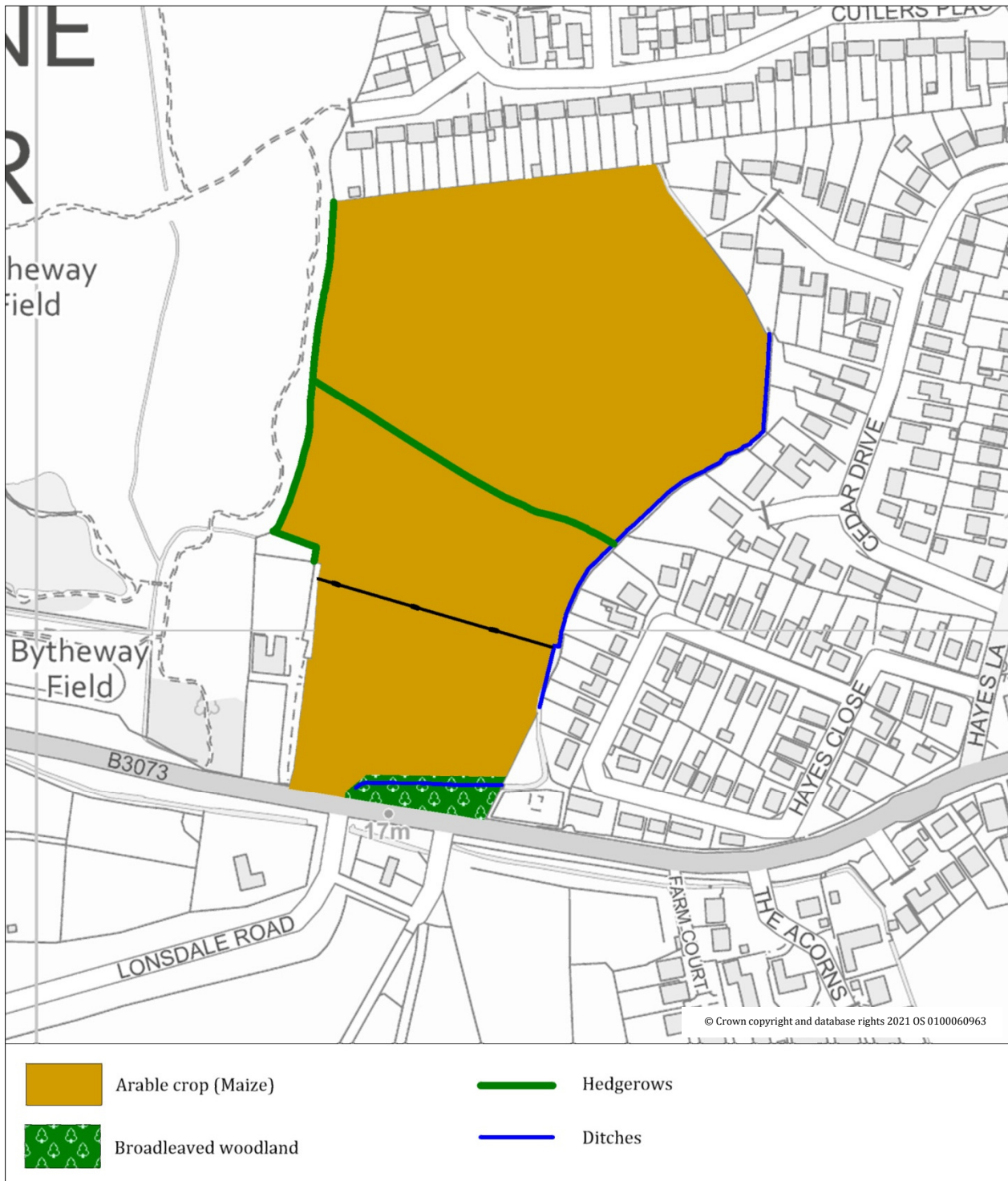
There are two hedgerows within the survey area, one on the western side and one between fields B and C. The latter is more a line of mature trees with scattered shrubs. Shrubs include Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, Hazel *Corylus avellana* and Holly *Ilex aquifolium*, plus climbers, Bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg., Honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum* and Hop *Humulus lupulus*. Trees include Ash

Fraxinus excelsior, Pedunculate Oak *Quercus robur* and Grey Willow *Salix cinerea*, plus planted Horse Chestnut *Aesculus hippocastanum* and Beech *Fagus sylvatica*. The ground flora has abundant Ivy *Hedera helix* where shaded with a more grassy ground layer under the line of trees with Cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata* and Yorkshire Fog *Holcus lanatus*.

Woodland

There is a very small area of secondary woodland in the south of the site by Leigh Road. Grey Willow *Salix cinerea* is abundant with small quantities of Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, Ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and Pedunculate Oak *Quercus robur*. The understorey is very sparse with Sycamore saplings and scattered bushes of Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and Holly *Ilex aquifolium*. The field layer has patchy Bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg., with Ivy *Hedera helix* dominating the ground layer. Most other species are found in small quantities including Male Fern *Dryopteris filix-mas*, Garlic Mustard *Alliaria petiolata*, Wood Dock *Rumex sanguineus*, Hogweed *Heracleum sphondylium* and Cuckoo Pint *Arum maculatum*. Lady Fern *Athyrium filix-femina* and Pendulous Sedge *Carex pendula* were noted along the shaded ditch.

5.2.1 Habitat map



5.2.2 Target notes



No.	Grid Ref	Target Note
01	SZ0323 9990	Secondary woodland by Leigh Road, Grey Willow is abundant with small quantities of Sycamore, Ash and Pedunculate Oak. The understorey is very sparse with Sycamore saplings and scattered Hawthorn and Holly. The field layer has patchy Bramble, with Ivy dominating the ground layer. Most other species are found in small quantity including Male Fern, Garlic Mustard, Wood Dock, Hogweed and Cuckoo Pint.
02	SZ0322 9996	Field A. A maize crop with some bare areas where the crop has failed. Where the maize is sparse ruderal species such as Knotgrass, Pale Persicaria, Redshank and Common Field Speedwell are present.

No.	Grid Ref	Target Note
03	SU0320 0000	Field A. Seasonally flooded area with Greater Plantain, Marsh Cudweed, Lesser Spearwort, Marsh Bird's-foot-trefoil, Water Pepper and Toad Rush.
04	SU0324 0005	Field B. A maize crop - dense in the west with a large area of sparse crop and bare cultivated ground in the east. The margins have ruderal plants typical of disturbed and nutrient rich ground including Fat Hen, Knotgrass, Creeping Buttercup, Redshank, Broad-leaved Dock, Stinging Nettle, Creeping Thistle and Prickly Sow-thistle. In the eastern area Marsh Bird's-foot-trefoil is locally abundant with occasional Common Sorrel.
05	SU0326 0008	Hedgerow / line of tree between Fields B & C. An overgrown hedgerow with mature shrubs including Blackthorn, Hawthorn, Hazel, Elder and small Grey Willow. There are also mature trees with Ash, Pedunculate Oak, Beech and Horse Chestnut. Climbers include Honeysuckle and Hop. The ground layer is very grassy with Yorkshire Fog and Cock's-foot plus patchy Bramble. The field margin on the south side has grassland species including Common Knapweed and Common Cat's-ear.
06	SU0329 0016	Field C. A maize crop with a significant area of bare cultivated ground or with a very sparse crop. The margins and disturbed areas have typical ruderal species including Common Chickweed, Fat Hen, Knotgrass, Broad-leaved Dock, Pale Persicaria, Redshank and Prickly Sow-thistle.
07	SU0337 0013	Field C. In the east of the field there are very fragmented remnants of the former grassland flora including scattered plants of Lesser Stitchwort, Lesser spearwort, Marsh Bird's-foot-trefoil, Common Sorrel, Trailing Tormentil, Tormentil and Devil's-bit Scabious.
08	SU0342 0012	Field C. Ditch running south along eastern edge, very little water at the time of the survey and rather shaded with Bramble, Hazel, Grey Willow and mature Oak trees on the eastern side.
09	SU0316 0015	Hedgerow on western side forming the boundary with Bytheway Field. Blackthorn, Hawthorn, Hazel, Ash and Pedunculate Oak with suckering Elm present locally. Some trees have been planted including Alder and Beech.
10	SU0316 0015	Badger sett noted among the scrub growing out from the wide hedgerow on the western side of Field B.

6.0 ASSESSMENT

A difficult site to assess as the fields are cultivated with a maize crop, but at the time of the survey they are of **Low Ecological Interest**. However, the presence of the Dorset Notable plants Tormentil, Trailing Tormentil, Common Knapweed and Devil's-Scabious plus others such as Lesser Stitchwort, Marsh Bird's-foot-trefoil, Common Cat's-ear and Lesser Hawkbit suggests that little-improved or unimproved grassland was present on some areas of the site until recently. Three plant species, Lesser Spearwort (VU), Tormentil (NT) and Devil's-bit Scabious (NT) are included on the England Red List (Stroh *et al*, 2014), although they are still frequent in parts of Dorset, they have been added to the list as widespread decliners.

The two lengths of hedgerow totalling **443 metres** qualify as **Hedgerows Priority Habitat** and **S41 Habitat of Principal Importance**.

6.1 PROTECTED SPECIES ASSESSMENT

Species	Status	Habitat Potential	Future surveys
Badger	WCA	A Badger sett was noted in the wide hedgerow along the western boundary.	
Bats	EPS; WCA	The mature hedges and oak trees around the margins of the site provide suitable foraging habitat and flight lines for bats.	Required
Dormouse	S41; EPS; WCA	The hedgerow along the western boundary has suitable habitat for this species. The nearest record (2017) is 2,200 metres to the northwest.	
Otter	EPS; WCA	No suitable habitat for this species.	
Water Vole	S41; WCA	No suitable habitat for this species.	
Brown Hare	S41		
Hedgehog	S41	Suitable habitat is present around the margins of the site.	
Great Crested Newt	EPS; S41	No suitable habitat for this species.	
Reptiles	S41; WCA	Suitable habitat for Slow Worm is present around the field margins.	

REFERENCES

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

DERC 2020 *Local Plan Greenbelt Sites: Ecological Data*. [Unpublished report for Dorset Council]

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Stroh, P.A., Leach, S.J., August, T.A., Walker, K.J., Pearman, D.A., Rumsey, F.J., Harrower, C.A., Fay, M.F., Martin, J.P., Pankhurst, T., Preston, C.D. & Taylor, I. 2014 *A Vascular Plant Red List for England*. Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland, Bristol.

APPENDIX I: Plant species recorded 14th September 2021

Species	Common Name	Status	Frequency
<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	Yarrow		R
<i>Agrostis capillaris</i>	Common Bent		O-LF
<i>Agrostis canina</i>	Velvet Bent		O-LF
<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>	Creeping Bent		O-LA
<i>Calystegia sepium</i>	Hedge Bindweed		O
<i>Carex hirta</i>	Hairy Sedge		O
<i>Carex leporina</i>	Oval Sedge		R
<i>Centaurea nigra</i>	Common Knapweed	DN-AG	O
<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>	Common Mouse-ear		R
<i>Chenopodium album</i>	Fat Hen		O-LF
<i>Chenopodium polyspermum</i>	Many-seeded Goosefoot		R
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Creeping Thistle		O-LF
<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	Spear Thistle		O
<i>Corylus avellana</i>	Hazel		O
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn		O
<i>Crepis capillaris</i>	Smooth Hawk's-beard		O
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	Cock's-foot		O-LF
<i>Dipsacus fullonum</i>	Teasel		R
<i>Epilobium hirsutum</i>	Great Willowherb		O
<i>Festuca rubra</i>	Red Fescue		O-LF
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	Ash		R
<i>Geum urbanum</i>	Wood Avens		R
<i>Glechoma hederacea</i>	Ground Ivy		O
<i>Glyceria fluitans</i>	Floating Sweet-grass		R
<i>Gnaphalium uliginosum</i>	Marsh Cudweed		R-O
<i>Hedera helix</i>	Ivy		O-LA
<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire Fog		O-LF
<i>Hypericum humifusum</i>	Trailing St John's-wort		O
<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>	Common Cat's-ear		R-O
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	Holly		O
<i>Impatiens glandulifera</i>	Himalayan Balsam		R-LF
<i>Jacobaea vulgare</i>	Ragwort		O
<i>Juncus bufonius</i>	Toad Rush		O-LA
<i>Juncus effusus</i>	Soft Rush		O
<i>Leontodon saxatilis</i>	Lesser Hawkbit		R-O
<i>Lolium perenne</i>	Perennial Rye-grass		R-O
<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>	Honeysuckle		O
<i>Lotus pedunculatus</i>	Marsh Bird's-foot-trefoil		O
<i>Persicaria maculosa</i>	Redshank		O-LF
<i>Persicaria lapathifolia</i>	Pale Persicaria		O-LF
<i>Persicaria hydropiper</i>	Water-pepper		O-LF

Species	Common Name	Status	Frequency
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort Plantain		R
<i>Plantago major</i>	Greater Plantain		O
<i>Polygonum aviculare</i>	Knotgrass		O-LF
<i>Potentilla anserina</i>	Silverweed		O-LF
<i>Potentilla anglica</i>	Trailing Tormentil	DN-NG	R-O
<i>Potentilla erecta</i>	Tormentil	NT; DN-NG	R-O
<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	Selfheal		R
<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	Blackthorn		O-LA
<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>	Bracken		O
<i>Pulicaria dysenterica</i>	Common Fleabane		R
<i>Quercus robur</i>	Pedunculate Oak		O
<i>Ranunculus flammula</i>	Lesser Spearwort	VU	O
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Creeping Buttercup		O-LF
<i>Rosa canina</i>	Dog Rose		O
<i>Rubus fruticosus agg.</i>	Bramble		F
<i>Rumex acetosa</i>	Common Sorrel		O
<i>Rumex crispus</i>	Curled Dock		R-O
<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	Broad-leaved Dock		O-LF
<i>Rumex sanguineus</i>	Wood Dock		O
<i>Sagina procumbens</i>	Procumbent Pearlwort		O
<i>Salix cinerea</i>	Grey Willow		O-LA
<i>Solanum nigrum</i>	Black Nightshade		R
<i>Sonchus asper</i>	Prickly Sow-thistle		O
<i>Stellaria graminea</i>	Lesser Stitchwort		R-O
<i>Stellaria media</i>	Common Chickweed		O
<i>Succisa pratensis</i>	Devil's-bit Scabious	NT; DN-NG	O
<i>Taraxacum officinale agg.</i>	Dandelion		O
<i>Teucrium scorodonia</i>	Wood Sage		O
<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	Red Clover		O-LF
<i>Trifolium repens</i>	White Clover		F-LA
<i>Tripleurospermum inodorum</i>	Scentless Mayweed		O-LA
<i>Ulmus procera</i>	English Elm		R-O
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Stinging Nettle		O
<i>Veronica persica</i>	Common Field Speedwell		O
<i>Vicia cracca</i>	Tufted Vetch		R

APPENDIX II: Photographs



FIG 1. Field A, seasonally wet area in the north of the field with abundant Lesser Spearwort.



FIG 2. Field C, southeast corner with failed crop looking west, the wet in the foreground has abundant Water Pepper.



FIG 3. Field C, southwest corner looking northeast, the centre of the crop has mostly failed.



FIG 4. Field C, eastern edge with failed crop looking northwest with flowering Devil's-bit Scabious and Tormentil, remnants of the former grassland habitat.