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Our Ref: EIR 2540
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Susan Davis

Request-8938-6a5092af@whatdotheyknow.com

Dear Susan Davis

ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION REGULATIONS 2004 – Road Verges – ecological protection scheme.

Your request for information has now been considered and the Council's response to your three questions is shown below.

You asked:

- a) **What protection measures a verge receives when it is included in the scheme.**

The Council currently does run a protection scheme for road verges by identifying those of wildlife value, that is, of botanical value. Having identified them as such, they are then designated as a Local Wildlife site (LWS), formerly referred to as a Site of Importance for Nature conservation (SINC). These sites are selected provided they comply with the criteria for the designation and are not referred to in terms of "Roadside Verges" as such, but for the grassland type e.g. mesotrophic grassland. The details for the designation are that they have to meet the criteria within at least one of the following five areas of consideration:

1. Habitat Quality

- a) ***The site contains a listed habitat and***
- b) ***the site meets the primary criteria for that habitat***

2. Habitat diversity

- a) ***The site contains two or more listed habitats in close association and***
- b) ***The combined area of these habitats amounts to 1ha or over and***
- c) ***at least two habitats meet the secondary criteria listed for each habitat***

3. Presence of Red Data Book species

- a) ***The site supports an established population of a Leicestershire and Rutland Red Data Book or Rare Plant Register species with the proviso that***
- b) ***Red Data Book bird populations can only be used to select LWSs according to the criteria used for their inclusion in the list (see Red Data Book species criteria for details).***

4. Significant species assemblages

a) The site contains a species assemblage which meets one of the listed species assemblage criteria.

5. Use of site as a wildlife resource by the community

a) The site meets the secondary criteria for the habitat which it contains and

b) The site is accessible to and widely used by the local community (see community criteria for details) or

c) There is a sense of ownership of the site by the local community (see community criteria for details) or

d) The site is of value for education and raising public awareness (see community criteria for details) or

e) The site is of historical importance for its ecology (see community criteria for details).

If the site is designated as a Local Wildlife Site, it is considered under the local planning policy regulations with regard to such sites being unsuitable for development. full details of the planning policy in the Local Development Framework with regard to LWS can be referred to via the Leicester City Council website

<http://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council--services/ep/planning/plansandpolicy/localplan/writtenstatement/adoptedcllpchapt10>

b) The list of verges covered by the scheme (and their locations – road name / number and six figure OS grid references would be fine)

There is currently only one road side verge site in Leicester that have been declared at LWS:

1. Ethel Road verge, Leicester SK 623 036

Designated for its habitat quality and presence of red data book species as a mesotrophic grassland. it contains for following species of note:

Carex flacca, C. panicea, Centaurea nigra, Galium verum, Lathyrus pratensis, Leontodon hispidus, Leucanthemum vulgare, Linum catharticum, Lotus corniculatus, Plantago media, Primula veris, Ranunculus acris, Rumex acetosa and Trifolium pratensis.

Anacamptis pyramidalis also recorded from this site in 1998 (Howard Bradshaw, pers. comm.) It is a local Red Data Book species. Ophrys apifera was recorded in 1999 (Howard Bradshaw, pers. comm.)

c) For each verge, the specific reasons why the verge has been included in the scheme – i.e. the notable species found there, or the NVC community present.

Please see answer to Question b)

Leicestershire County council is responsible for co-ordinating the LWS records for the county and has a list of sites where the roadside verges have been designated and what the policy is on their protection. The contact details are:

Sue Timms, Snr Ecologist
x.xxxxx@xxxxx.xxx.xx

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Yours sincerely

Ed Smith
Head of Information Governance
Legal Services