

About the Whitchurch Green Fields SINC

Site description:

An area of semi-improved neutral grassland in Whitchurch, bounded on three sides by the Glamorgan Canal Local Nature Reserve, and to the south by the grounds of the Whitchurch Hospital. The field was formerly horse-grazed, and supports a rather patchy mix of sward heights and species composition, fringed by Brambles. The long grass areas typically include Cock's-foot and Yorkshire Fog, while the shorter swards comprise mainly Common Bent, Red Fescue and Sweet Vernal-grass. Ribwort Plantain and Creeping Buttercup are the most prominent herbs. Eyebright, Lesser Stitchwort, Common Bird's-foot-trefoil and Yellow Rattle occur sparsely through the finer-leaved grass areas. There are local patches of tall herb vegetation including Broad-leaved Dock, Nettle and Spear Thistle. Several small ant-hills are present, mainly near to the sunny margins. Bracken is locally abundant around some of the margins and there are several patches of very dense Bramble in the north of the site. There is a network of informal paths through the field, with short vegetation usually in the vicinity of the paths.

Species recorded at this site leading to SINC selection:

Barren Strawberry, Bluebell, Burnet-saxifrage, Cat's-ear, Common Bird's-foot-trefoil, Common Centaury, Common Dog-violet, Common Hemp-nettle, Common Sorrel, Common Spotted Orchid, Common Twayblade, Dog's Mercury, Eyebright, Field Maple, Field Scabious, Field Wood-rush, Giant Fescue, Goldenrod, Greater Knapweed, Guelder-rose, Hairy Brome, Hairy Wood-rush, Hard Fern, Hoary Ragwort, Lesser Stitchwort, Marsh Cudweed, Oxeye Daisy, Perforate St. John's-wort, Pignut, Primrose, Ramsons, Red Clover, Rough Hawkbit, Sanicle, Scaly Male Fern, Smooth Hawk's-beard, Soft Shield Fern, Spindle, Toothwort, Tufted Vetch, Tutsan, Wild Carrot, Wild Service-tree, Wood Anemone, Wood Melick, Wood Speedwell, Wood-sedge, Wych Elm, Yellow Archangel, Yellow Rattle, Yew

Protected and priority species recorded:

Bullfinch, Common Frog, Green Woodpecker, Long-Winged Conehead, Redshank, Song Thrush

Priority habitat:

Lowland meadow

Recommendations for management of the site:

GRASSLAND: Grazing is an ideal management technique, especially with cattle which provide a varied vegetation height and areas of bare ground. Sheep can also be used, however they should be introduced later in the season to graze on flower heads and herbs. Grazing and mowing keeps grass short, which is ideal for grassland fungi such as waxcaps. The level of grazing should be considered carefully as overgrazing could lead to increased amount of bare ground, the spread of weeds and nutrient enrichment, whereas undergrazing which can lead to scrub encroachment of bracken and invasive species. However, some scrub is welcome in order to benefit birds and insects. Furthermore, grazing when the ground is wet should be avoided as hooves will churn up the ground. Where land is mown, removing grass cuttings also avoids nutrient enrichment of the soil. Chemicals such as fertilisers or moss killers can damage or kill grassland fungi, and should be avoided. In marshy areas, grazing or mowing between April and June when ground-nesting wading birds are nesting should be avoided.

Please note:

This area has been designated a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation by Cardiff Council. This does not formally protect the site or place any restrictions upon the landowner. This information given is used to ensure that nature conservation is taken into account in planning decisions. This designation itself does not confer any rights of access to the site and