

Birmingham & Black Country Local Sites Assessment Report

EcoRecord Reference	Site Name	Grid Reference	Current Status [1]	Survey Date(s)
N/A	Land at Greenwood Road and Lazy Hill Road, Aldridge	SK 06199 02571	Potential Site of Importance	30.10.2019
Planning Authority	Site Ownership	Area/Length	Reason for Survey	Report Date
Walsall	Private	2.65ha	BC Call for Sites	15.01.2020
Meets LS Criteria	None	Type	N/A	i.e. Wildlife/Geological
Amendment(s)	None	i.e. None; New Site; Upgrade; Downgrade; Extension; Whole/Part Deletion		
Description	Site does not meet the Local Site threshold.			

Citation (Summary of Value)

Land at Greenwood Road and Lazy Hill Road, Aldridge encompasses 2.65ha of species poor semi-improved neutral grassland field, used for a hay meadow crop, bordered by intact and defunct hedgerows and a post and wire fence. Along the south boundary lies sporadic areas of tall herb and immature scrub caused by restricted management. Both the grassland and hedgerows habitat provides limited levels of species and structural diversity, however, offers a good example of agricultural farming.

The site is located on the edge of the green belt and in close proximity of Lazy Hill Road Hedge SLINC and Lazy Hill Wood SINC. Despite the potential of the site being used as a component part of the ecological corridor for green spaces within the green belt. The site doesn't provide a key corridor to either designated sites or to the surrounding landscape. Land at Greenwood Road and Lazy Hill Road Aldridge, therefore does not meet the threshold criteria for selection as a local site.

Local Site Selection Criteria

Ecological

Habitat Diversity	L	The site supports a limited range of typical agricultural habitats, which have been subject to regular agricultural practices over a long period time. However, some structural variation can be seen within the onsite intact and defunct hedgerows.
Species Diversity	L	The overall species diversity of the survey area is low, due to the current agricultural practices on site. The highest flora species diversity is found within the semi-improved neutral grassland field, however, this was still overall low in species composition.
Habitat Rarity	L	The habitats present on site are <i>Common</i> habitats across Birmingham and Black Country. However, the intact hedgerows along the eastern boundary is listed as a Habitats of Principal Importance.
Species Rarity	L	All flora and incidental fauna species recorded onsite during the Phase 1 habitat survey, have been identified as <i>Common</i> within Birmingham and the Black Country.
Size or Extent	L	In the context of Walsall's Local Wildlife Sites, Land at Greenwood Road and Lazy Hill Road, Aldridge is of small extent in terms of the total site area present within the site boundary.
Naturalness	M	The site is dominated by semi-natural habitat that have been established since at least 1840s, however, due to human use, the key ecological features on site are limited to the boundary.
Position & Connectivity	M	The site lies in close proximity to two of designated sites, Lazy Hill Road Hedge SLINC and Lazy Hill Wood SINC. However, does not provide a key ecological corridor to the designated sites and surrounding landscape.

Geological

Not Assessed

Social

Historical & Cultural	L-M	The field system present has been established since at least the 1840s with only minor changes to field structure. However, significant changes to the adjacent land use has occurred within this time, mainly within 1970s when the adjacent fields were given to residential housing.
Access	L	The site is under private ownership and is not open to the public.
Aesthetic	M	In the context of the surrounding landscape which is predominantly built-up, the survey areas provide attractive meadow fields for surrounding residential houses.
Recorded History	L-M	Historical information is recorded within mapping records dating back to 1840s. The Black Country Historic Landscape Characterisation dataset describes the area as fields systems dating back to at least the medieval period.
Value for Learning	L	At the current time value for learning would be assessed as low due to access restriction.

Site Description

Land at Greenwood Road and Lazy Hill Road is located north east of Walsall adjacent to Greenwood Road.

The survey area consists of a species poor semi-improved neutral grassland field, used for a hay meadow crop, bordered by intact and defunct hedgerows and a post and wire fence. The field itself is flat topographically with no structural variation or species diversity within the sward. Small patches of scattered scrub and tall herb habitat are noted along the southern boundary, where the mowing regime and the roadside management is restricted.

Historical mapping shows that survey area, which includes the grassland field and the north hedgerow, was present since at least the 1840s, however, at this time the field was a central part to the field system, although with a slightly modified shape. At the present time the field lies on the edge of the agricultural field system bordering a residential housing estates.

For the purpose of this survey, the site has been divided into one field compartment and two hedgerow compartments.

Habitats

Phase 1 Name	Bramble and Scrub – scattered	Phase 1 Code	A2.1 / A2.2 / A2.1Rf / A2.2Rf
In the south-eastern corner of the survey area lies a small patch of Ash <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> saplings. Due to the sporadic placement it is likely that the saplings are self-set rather than planted. Their presence suggests that this area of the field is likely not part of the cutting regime undertaken within the grassland field.			
In addition, along the southern boundary lies a number of individual immature Hawthorn <i>Crataegus monogyna</i> and Ash shrubs.			
Phase 1 Name	Scattered tree – Broadleaved	Phase 1 Code	A3.1
An individual semi-mature Pedunculate Oak <i>Quercus robur</i> was located on the north eastern corner of the survey area within hedgerow H1.			
Phase 1 Name	Species Poor Semi-improved Grassland	Phase 1 Code	
The survey area encompasses a species poor semi-improved grassland field used currently as a hay meadow crop. It is regularly managed for agricultural purposes and cut annually. The fields are relatively flat with limited structural variation, low sward diversity and forb composition. The sward contains abundant Perennial Rye-grass <i>Lolium perenne</i> , Yorkshire Fog <i>Holcus lanatus</i> , False Oat-grass <i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i> with occasional Sweet Vernal Grass <i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i> . Forbs were present within the sward, however, coverage was limited and no more than occasionally present. Species include Ribwort Plantain <i>Plantago lanceolata</i> , Yarrow <i>Achillea millefolium</i> and Smooth Hawksbeard <i>Crepis capillaris</i> .			
Phase 1 Name	Other tall herb and fern – Tall Ruderal	Phase 1 Code	C3.1
The southern boundary consists of a post and wire fence. Along this fence line lies sporadic patches of tall herb, where mowing regime has not fully gone up to the boundary. The habitat comprises abundant Cow Parsley <i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i> with Common Hogweed <i>Heracleum sphondylium</i> , Creeping Thistle <i>Cirsium arvense</i> , Bristly Oxtongue <i>Helminthotheca echioides</i> , Common Ragwort <i>Senecio jacobaea</i> , Field Horsetail <i>Equisetum arvense</i> and Mugwort <i>Artemisia vulgaris</i> . Evidence of encroachment from the adjacent residential gardens is present, due to the presence of garden escape Round-leaved Cranesbill <i>Geranium rotundifolium</i> .			
Phase 1 Name	Intact / defunct hedgerow	Phase 1 Code	J2.1
An intact hawthorn dominated hedgerow (H1) is located along the eastern boundary and is approximately 2m high by 1m wide. Currently the hedgerow is managed close to stem through flailing cutting, in part for roadside management. Shrub species include abundant Sycamore <i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i> and Bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> and a field layer comprising Cow Parsley, Common Nettle <i>Urtica dioica</i> , Bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> , Herb Robert <i>Geranium robertianum</i> , doves foot cranes bill <i>Geranium molle</i> , Cocks Foot <i>Dactylis glomerata</i> , Common Hogweed, Dandelion <i>Taraxacum officinalis</i> agg., Cleavers <i>Galium aparine</i> , Bristly Oxtongue and Common Nettle.			
A defunct hawthorn hedgerow (H2), with scattered semi-mature Goat Willow <i>Salix caprea</i> , Hazel <i>Corylus avellana</i> , Pedunculate Oak and Elder <i>Sambucus nigra</i> , lies along the northern boundary. No evidence of recent management was present; this has resulted in large gaps forming within the hedgerow. These large gaps have been infilled with extensive Bracken, Bramble and Rosebay Willowherb <i>Chamaenerion angustifolium</i> . Should the lack of management continue the hedgerow will likely become a semi-mature tree line with interspersed patches of scrub and ruderal within the next five years. As the adjacent fields are used for horse grazing a post and wire fence lines the hedgerow to ensure that linear feature is stock proof.			
Notes	A regularly used mammal path was noted running along the edge and throughout the central section of the hedgerow H1.		

Habitats of Note [2]

Phase 1 Name	Phase 1 Code	EHD	NERC	LBAP	Rarity	Year
Hedgerows (Intact)	J2.1		Y			2019
Notes						

Species of Note [2]

Flora							
Species	Statutory	NERC	LBAP	RDL	Rarity	Axiophyte	Year
<i>Geranium rotundifolium</i> - Round-leaved Crane's-bill					R		2019
<i>Leontodon hispidus</i> - Rough Hawkbit					U	BBCF_Ax	2019

Notes								
Fauna								
	Species	Statutory	NERC	LBAP	RDL	Concern	Rarity	Year
None Recorded								
The following Species of Note have been recorded within 500m of the assessment site boundary.								
None Recorded								
Notes	Within the northern boundary hedgerow lies a Pedunculate Oak contains a woodpecker hole. This indicates the presence of Woodpecker sp. on site, but also provides roosting features for local bat populations.							

Site/Habitat Suitability for Other Species of Note (not recorded during the survey)

Description/Notes	<p>The habitats on site provide suitable foraging habitat for the European Hedgehog <i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>. The onsite grassland and hedgerows offer potential foraging and commuting habitat for local bat populations While the semi-mature to mature tree present have the potential to offer suitable roosting features for bat species.</p> <p>The open grassland field offers potentially suitable habitat for Brown hare <i>Lepus europaeus</i> and local bird populations.</p>
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Invasive Species [3]

	Species	Location	Abundance (DAFOR)	Year Recorded
None Recorded				
Notes				

Geology

Solid/Drift Formation	The survey area encompasses two formations; Chester Formation – Conglomerate and Chester Formation - Sandstone and Conglomerate, interbedded.
Description	Both formations are sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 247 to 250million years ago in the Triassic period. However, Chester Formation – Conglomerate is a local environment previously dominated by rivers, while the Chester Formation - Sandstone and Conglomerate contain sedimentary rocks which are fluvial in origin.
Features of Value	
1	None Record.

Soils

No soil survey was undertaken however; the species present across the site suggested the soils are predominantly neutral.

Public Access & Site Usage

Land Use	Agricultural land use.
Access Level	Restricted.
Access Type(s)	Restricted.

Comparison with Previous Survey(s) Results

No previous recorded survey.

Summary of Assessment

Land at Greenwood Road and Lazy Hill Road, Aldridge lies in close proximity to a number of designated sites and, therefore, plays a part in the ecological network that connects these sites with the surrounding landscape.

However, the majority of the site encompasses species poor semi-improved grassland, used as a hay meadow, and two hedgerows, intact or defunct, respectively, that, although do potentially hold some ecological value for protected species, when assessed against the Birmingham & Black Country Local Sites Selection Criteria it fails to meet the selection threshold of a Local Wildlife Site.

Recommendations (including further survey & site management/enhancement)

1	Further fauna surveys including winter and breeding bird surveys would be beneficial to ascertain importance of the site for local bird populations, including Skylarks.
2	Defunct hedgerow onsite should be restored by planting of native species.
3	Both hedgerows should be placed under active management to maintain and enhance the hedgerow structure and density. This should involve annual trimming outside nesting bird season.
4	The semi-mature Pedunculate Oak should be placed under active management to ensure that the tree remains healthy.

Data Sources

	Source	Date
Species and Habitat Data Source(s)	Ecorecord data search, 2019. Black Country Historic Landscape Characterisation, Wolverhampton City Council, 2009 (updated 2010): https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/blackcountry_hlc_2009/	14/01/2019
Geological Data Source(s)	British Geological Society 1:50,000 bedrock & superficial deposits GIS web map services from BGS website: https://www.bgs.ac.uk/data/services/mash-ups/desktopgis.html	14/01/2019
Historic Data Sources(s)	Ordnance Survey Country Series Mapping 1884 – 1992. Quigley, P. 2010 Black Country Historic Landscape Characterisation, electronic dataset, Wolverhampton City Council. Google earth pro historical Imagery, November 2019	14/01/2019

[1] Definitions of Local Sites in B&BC (SINCs & SLINCs) and Potential Sites of Importance (PSIs)

In Birmingham and the Black Country Local Wildlife and Geological Sites encompass what are termed Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) and Sites of Local Importance for Nature Conservation (SLINCs). This two-tier system aims to ensure that all sites of substantive local nature conservation and geological value are selected by assessing sites in both a sub-regional (i.e. Birmingham and the Black Country) and metropolitan borough or city context (either Birmingham, Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall or Wolverhampton). The two designations are defined as:

- Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) - Sites of substantive nature conservation value in the context of Birmingham and the Black Country.
- Site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation (SLINC) - Sites of substantive nature conservation value in the context of a metropolitan borough.

Potential Sites of Importance (PSIs) have not yet been assessed against the Local Wildlife and Geological Sites selection criteria but may potentially support species of note, areas of important semi-natural habitat or valuable geological features. PSIs are identified primarily through the use of aerial photography, but also through reference to old maps, existing records and local knowledge. Commonly these sites will not have been subject to the survey work necessary to undertake a Local Wildlife and Geological Sites assessment.

[2] Habitats/Species of Note Tables – Attribute Definitions

STATUTORY (PROTECTED) - EHD = EU Habitats Directive (plus where relevant the Annexe II or IV) | **WCA S1** = Wildlife & Countryside Act Schedule 1 (birds protected at all times) | **WCA S5** = Wildlife & Countryside Act Schedule 5 (animals with various levels of protection) | **WCA S8** = Wildlife & Countryside Act Schedule 8 (higher and lower plants with various levels of protection) | **PBA** = Protection of Badgers Act 1992 | **HabRegs2** = The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 2010 (Schedule 2) | **HabRegs4** = The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 2010 (Schedule 4).

NERC – Y = Habitats/Species included on the current list of Principal Importance in England under Section 41 of the NERC Act (2006 or amended).

LBAP – Y = Habitats/Species included on the latest B&BC LBAP list of Priority Habitats/Species.

RDL - Species included on Global IUCN & British Red Data Lists: **BRed** = Bird Population Status – red | **BAmb** = Bird Population Status - amber | **RLGB.EN** = IUCN (2001) – Endangered | **RLGB.VU** = IUCN (2001) – Vulnerable | **RDBGB.R** = IUCN (pre 1994) – Rare | **RLGB.Lr(NT)** = IUCN (2001) - Lower risk - near threatened | **RDBGB.IK** = RDB - Insufficient known | **RLGB.DD** = IUCN (2001) - Data Deficient

RARITY (HABITATS) - BIRMINGHAM & BLACK COUNTRY - Y = Habitats included on the B&BC list of locally rare habitats (administered by EcoRecord).

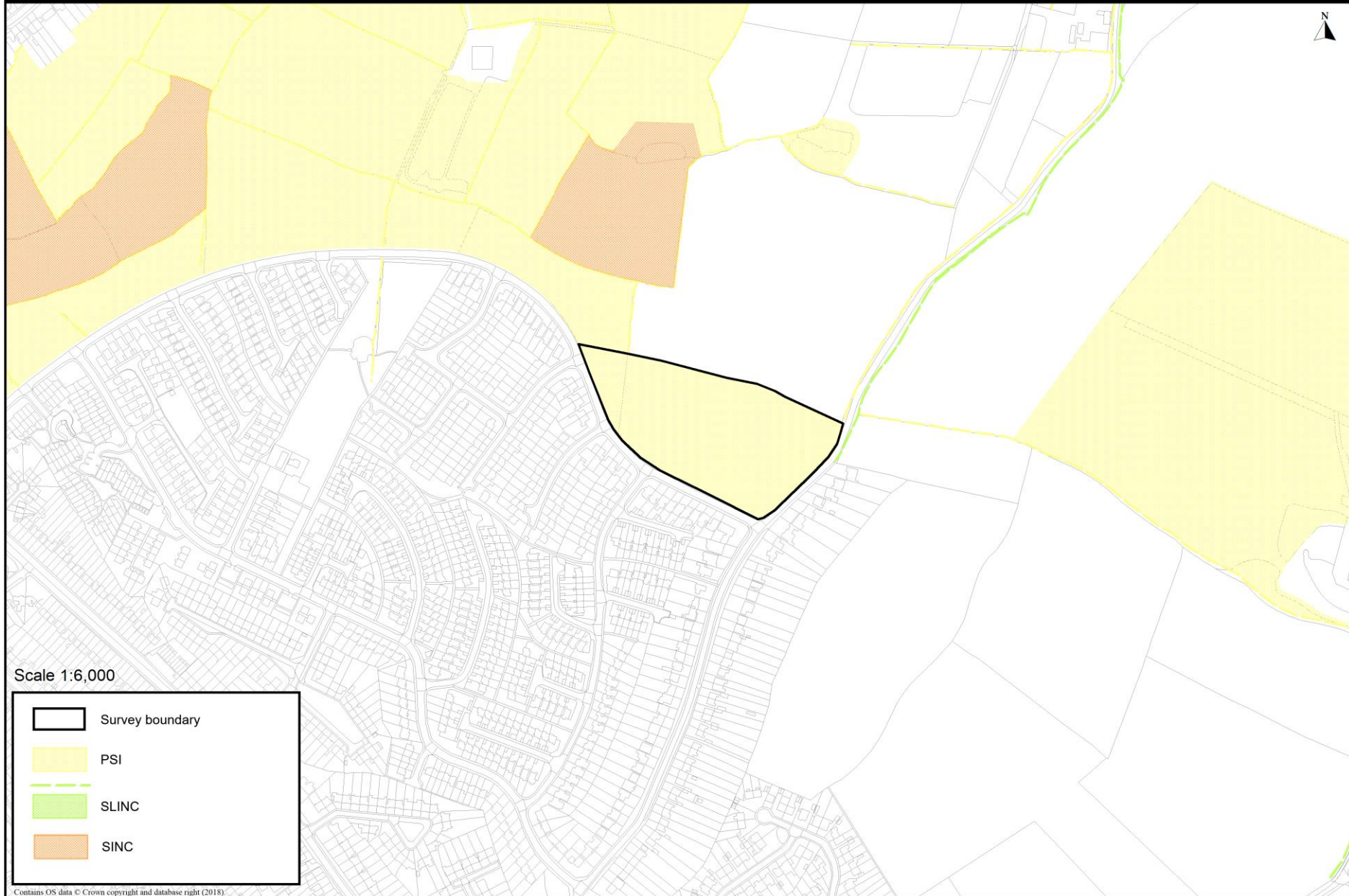
RARITY (FLORA SPECIES) - BIRMINGHAM & BLACK COUNTRY - (based on data held and managed by EcoRecord): **VR** = Very Rare - a species present in less than 1.0% of 1Km squares, tetrads, or 5Km squares in B&BC | **R** = Rare - a species present in 1.0% - 4.3% of 1Km squares, tetrads, or 5Km squares in B&BC | **U** = Uncommon - a species present in 4.3% - 12% of 1Km squares, tetrads or 5Km squares in B&BC | **NRR** = no recent B&BC records.

AXIOPHYTE - BBCF_Ax = included on the Birmingham & the Black Country list of axiophytes (administered by EcoRecord).

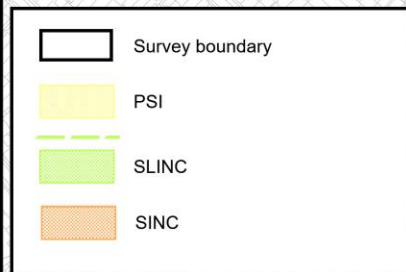
YEAR - The most recent year the species has been recorded.

[3] Species listed on Schedule 9 part 1 (animals) and part 2 (plants) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended - this lists animals which may not be released or allowed to escape into the wild and plants which may not be planted or otherwise caused to grow in the wild.

Map 1: Land at Greenwood Road and Lazy Hill Road, Aldridge Current & Recommended Designation



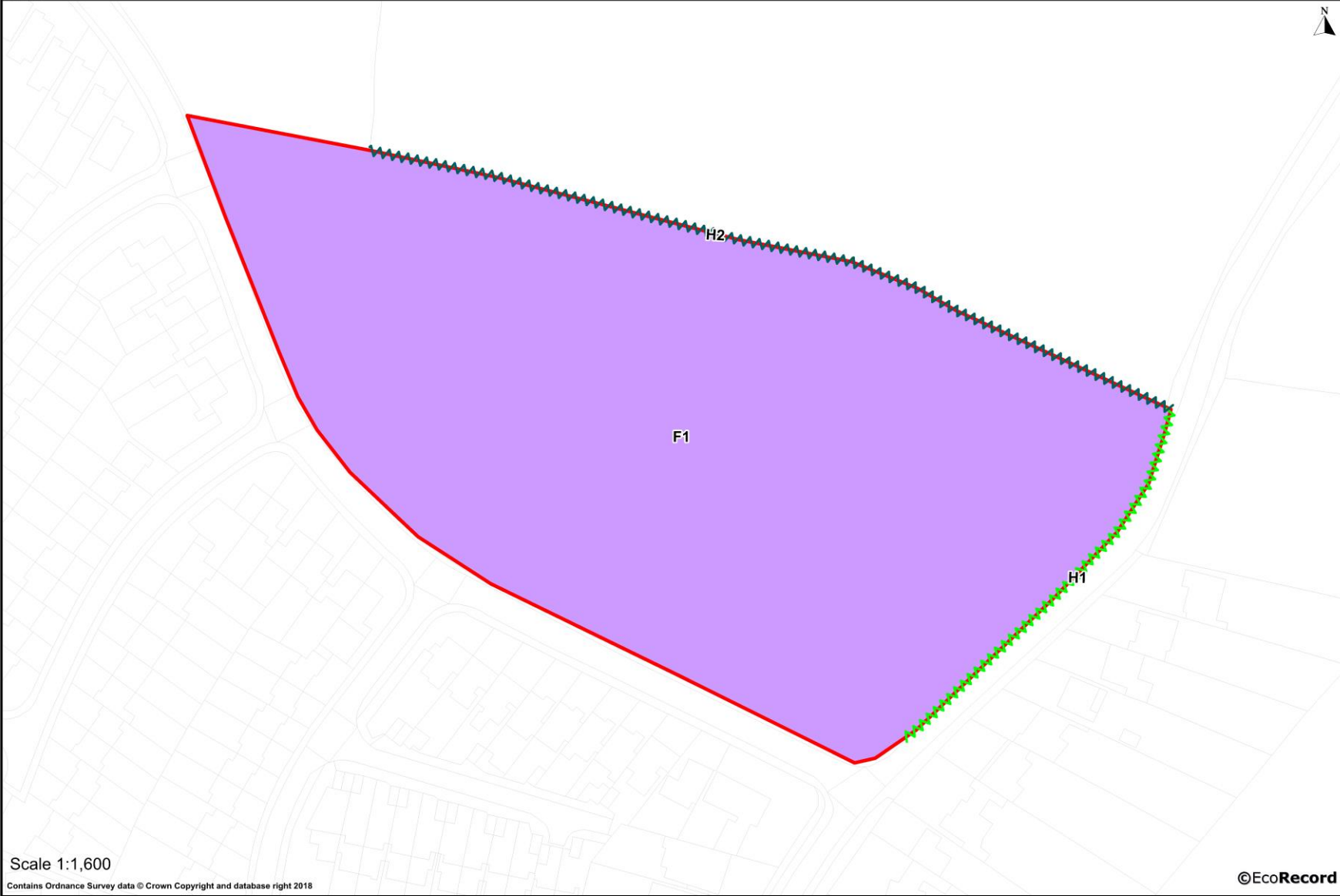
Scale 1:6,000



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Map 2: Land at Greenwood Road and Lazy Hill Road, Aldridge Compartment Map - 17.01.2020



Scale 1:1,600

Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown Copyright and database right 2018

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Map 3: Warley Woods Phase 1 Habitat Map - 03.01.2020



Grassland crop used as a meadow crop comprises Perennial Rye-grass, Yorkshire Fog, Sweet Vernal Grass, Yarrow, False Oat Grass and Red Fescue.

Defunct hedgerow with minimal structure. Long stretches of the hedgerow are now dominated by Bracken, bramble and Rosebay Willowherb with scattered semi-mature trees in linear clusters comprising Hazel, Hawthorn, Pedunculate Oak, and Elder.

Immature Hawthorn

Semi-mature Pedunculate Oak

- Legend:**
- Broadleaved woodland - semi-natural
 - Broadleaved woodland - plantation
 - Broad-leaved tree - planted
 - Coniferous woodland - plantation
 - Mixed woodland - plantation
 - Scrub - dense
 - Bramble scrub
 - Scrub - scattered
 - Bramble - scattered
 - Parkland - broadleaved
 - Parkland - coniferous
 - Parkland - mixed
 - Neutral grassland - semi-improved
 - Poor semi-improved grassland
 - Tall herb
 - Amenity grassland
 - Introduced shrub
 - Dry ditch
 - Bare ground
-
- Intact hedgerow
 - Defunct hedgerow
 - Hedgerow with trees
-
- Building
 - Surfaced path
 - Unsurfaced path
-
- Desire Line
 - Fence

Tall herb vegetation present along the southern boundary comprises Cow Parsley, Common Hogweed, Creeping Thistle, Mugwort, Common Ragwort and Round Leaved Crane's Bill.

Post and wire fencing

Immature Ash

Area with frequent Ash saplings.

Intact Hawthorn dominated hedgerow with sporadic patches of Bracken throughout.

Site Photographs



Photo1. Species poor semi-improved grassland used for a meadow crop



Photo 2. Defunct Hawthorn dominated hedgerow with large stretch of Bracken, Bramble and Rosebay Willowherb



Photo 3. Defunct Hawthorn dominated hedgerow with large stretch of Bracken, Bramble and Rosebay Willowherb. Standing deadwood present within the hedgerow.



Photo 4. Mature Pedunculate Oak present within hedgerow H2 containing a south facing woodpecker hole.

Species Records

FLORA

Field 1 (Gardener's Piece, Lazy Hill)

Scientific Name	Common Name
<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	Yarrow
<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>	Sweet Vernal-grass
<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	Cow Parsley
<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>	False Oat-grass
<i>Artemisia vulgaris</i>	Mugwort
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Creeping Thistle
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn
<i>Crepis capillaris</i>	Smooth Hawk's-beard
<i>Equisetum arvense</i>	Field Horsetail
<i>Festuca rubra</i>	Red Fescue
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	Ash
<i>Galium aparine</i>	Cleavers
<i>Geranium rotundifolium</i>	Round-leaved Crane's-bill
<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	Hogweed
<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire-fog
<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>	Cat's-ear
<i>Leontodon hispidus</i>	Rough Hawkbit
<i>Lolium perenne</i>	Perennial Rye-grass
<i>Picris echioides</i>	Bristly Oxtongue
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort Plantain
<i>Poa annua</i>	Annual Meadow-grass
<i>Poa trivialis</i>	Rough Meadow-grass
<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>	Bracken
<i>Quercus robur</i>	Pedunculate Oak
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Creeping Buttercup
<i>Senecio jacobaea</i>	Common Ragwort
<i>Trifolium repens</i>	White Clover
<i>Vicia sativa</i>	Common Vetch

Hedgerow 1 (Lazy Hill Road Hedge)

Scientific Name	Common Name
<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	Sycamore
<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	Cow Parsley
<i>Artemisia vulgaris</i>	Mugwort
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	Cock's-foot
<i>Galium aparine</i>	Cleavers
<i>Geranium molle</i>	Dove's-foot Crane's-bill
<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	Herb-Robert
<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	Hogweed
<i>Picris echioides</i>	Bristly Oxtongue
<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>	Bracken

<i>Rubus fruticosus agg.</i>	Bramble
<i>Senecio jacobaea</i>	Common Ragwort
<i>Taraxacum officinale agg.</i>	Dandelion
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Common Nettle

Hedgerow 2 (Aldridge/Shenstone Boundary Hedge)

Scientific Name	Common Name
<i>Chamerion angustifolium</i>	Rosebay Willowherb
<i>Corylus avellana</i>	Hazel
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn
<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>	Bracken
<i>Quercus robur</i>	Pedunculate Oak
<i>Rubus fruticosus agg.</i>	Bramble
<i>Salix caprea</i>	Goat Willow
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	Elder

