

# Birmingham & Black Country Local Sites Assessment Report

EcoRecord Reference	Site Name	Grid Reference	Designation(s)	Survey Date(s)
WA068 (part) and n/a	Middlemore Lane West	SK 03870030	SLINC (part)	11.09.2018
Planning Authority	Site Ownership	Area/Length	Reason for Survey	Report Date
Walsall M.B.C	Private	1.5 ha	Black Country call for sites	22.11.2018

Meets LS Criteria	SLINC (part)	Type	Wildlife	i.e. Wildlife/Geological

Amendment(s)	Part Deletion	i.e. None; New Site; Upgrade; Downgrade; Extension; Whole/Part Deletion
Description	Reduction in SLINC designated hedgerow on the eastern side of the site due habitat loss.	

## Citation (Summary of Value)

The site offers little intrinsic value other than the hedgerow running from the railway road bridge alongside Bosty Lane (B4154) to the corner with Middlemore Lane West. Totalling 200 meters in length with some fine examples of standards with an impressive old earthen bank. The grassland has potential to contain and develop an interesting flora due to its proximity to other floristically interesting sites and having the same limestone substrate, but is currently floristically poor.

## Local Site Selection Criteria

Ecological		
Habitat Diversity	L-M	The small site offers two key habitats, neutral grassland, which is under horse grazing management, and a mature hedgerow which is managed from the roadside through flailing.
Species Diversity	M	The extant hedgerow has a high diversity of woody species, good species mix and structure and two axiophytes recorded within the field layer: Black Bryony ( <i>Dioscorea communis</i> ) and Dog's Mercury ( <i>Mercurialis perennis</i> ).
Habitat Rarity	L-M	The diverse hedgerow with mature trees and a large field bank is an increasingly rare feature.
Species Rarity	L-M	With some woodland field-layer flora persisting within the hedgerow and the hedge itself offering good nesting habitats and potential roost sites for bats.
Size or Extent	L	The site is small within the wider landscape but one of the last remaining fields north of Bosty lane below the Daw End Railway Cutting SSSI.
Naturalness	L-M	Due to the pressure to keep the busy road clear the hedge is flailed too frequently and the grassland is currently grazed heavily, leading to the relatively low naturalness across the site.
Position & Connectivity	M	The eastern hedgerow is isolated though the western one lies close to woodland at the head of Daw End Railway Cutting SSSI. The hedgerow borders farmland and is likely to have some importance for farmland birds.
Geological		
	n/a	Not assessed.
Social		
Historical & Cultural	L-M	The field has been in this form since at least the 1880s, with some of the existing large hedgerow Pedunculate Oaks marked on historic OS mapping, making them at least 130 years old.
Access	L	The site is privately owned and access is restricted but the site does offer roadside access off Bosty Lane and Middlemore Lane West.
Aesthetic	L-M	The site offers limited aesthetic value as it is grazed and the bramble boundary on Middlemore Lane West is untidy, however, the mature hedgerow and open nature of the site contribute to the semi-rural character of the area.
Recorded History	L	The site has only had one full survey. Its cultural history is not known however ordnance survey mapping from the late 19 <sup>th</sup> century details the site's surrounding historical land use and other supplementary documents are likely to provide information prior to this.
Value for Learning	L	The site offers little in the way of formal or informal learning opportunities.

**Site Description**

A small agricultural field supporting open grassland which is used for grazing, borders a railway to the north and Middlemore Lane West to the east. The southern boundary is delineated by a mature hedgerow with a good field bank feature and species mix with some woodland flora which runs along Bosty Lane from east to west. The Middlemore Lane hedgerow has become completely defunct (possibly grubbed-out following initial designation as a SLINC) and is now a line of bramble and tall herb.

**Habitats**

Phase 1 Name	Bramble	Phase 1 Code	A21RF
The eastern boundary of the site is delineated by a concrete post and wire fence, this has become overgrown with Bramble ( <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.), Common Nettle ( <i>Urtica dioica</i> ) and Rosebay Willowherb ( <i>Chamerion angustifolium</i> ) in localised patches.			
Phase 1 Name	Neutral Grassland	Phase 1 Code	B2
The horse paddock makes up all of the site's grassland and had apparently been cut earlier in the year and then grazed. The identifiable species making up the sward included Common Bent ( <i>Agrostis capillaris</i> ), Red Fescue ( <i>Festuca rubra</i> ), Timothy ( <i>Phleum pratense</i> ) with Greater Plantain ( <i>Plantago major</i> ) dominating the heavily poached areas of the paddock around the field entrance on the north eastern corner. Other forbs include Meadow Buttercup ( <i>Ranunculus acris</i> ), Creeping Buttercup ( <i>Ranunculus repens</i> ) and Red Clover ( <i>Trifolium pratense</i> ).			
Phase 1 Name	Hedge with Trees	Phase 1 Code	J232
The over stood hedgerow forms the southern boundary of the site and is species rich with a continuous canopy of trees along its length. The mature trees in the canopy include Pedunculate Oak ( <i>Quercus robur</i> ), Field Maple ( <i>Acer campestre</i> ) and Ash ( <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> ). The hedge has become gappy in the centre and is more complete at either end, there is no management to the large trees. The two ends offer more structure and are complete enough to have been managed through felling on the roadside of Bosty Lane. The hedge is complemented by a large field bank running its entire length and where the hedge is not dense enough the field has been made secure by barbed wire.			

**Habitats of Note [1]**

Phase 1 Name	Phase 1 Code	EHD	BAP	NERC	Rarity	Year Recorded
Hedgerow	J232		UK			2018

**Species of Note [1]****Flora**

Species	Statutory	BAP	NERC	RL	Rarity	Axiophyte	Year Recorded
<i>Dioscorea communis</i> - Black Bryony						BBCF_Ax	2018
<i>Mercurialis perennis</i> - Dog's Mercury*						BBCF_Ax	2018

**Notes** \*Recorded adjacent to the site on the boundary line

**Fauna**

Species	Statutory	BAP	NERC	RL	Concern	Rarity	Year Recorded
<b>Notes</b> No notable species were recorded.							

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

<b>Description/Notes</b>	The locality to the geological SSSI which supports a number of bat species would suggest the possibility of this site being an important foraging site. The mature nature of the hedgerow trees would also suggest opportunity for bat roosts in the trees, as well as supporting West European Hedgehog ( <i>Erinaceus europaeus</i> ).
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**Invasive Species [2]**

Species	Location	Abundance (DAFOR)	Year Recorded
<b>Notes</b> None recorded.			2018

**Geology**

<b>Solid/Drift Formation</b>	Coalbrookdale Formation
<b>Description</b>	Mudstone. Sedimentary Bedrock formed approximately 427 to 433 million years ago in the Silurian Period
<b>Features of Value</b>	

**Soils**

Slowly permeable seasonally wet acid loamy and clayey soils

Public Access & Site Usage	
Land Use	Paddock.
Access Level	None.
Access Type(s)	Private.

Comparison with Previous Survey(s) Results
In a previous survey on 16.02.90 as part of the Bosty Lane Hedges (WA068) the appearance of the main hedgerow along Bosty Lane is very similar to the description, however, at this time the field was ploughed. Currently it is being grazed.

Boundary (notes)
The survey site comprises a self-contained field with a railway line and roads forming the boundaries.

Summary of Assessment
The hedgerow along Bosty Lane has some value due to the species recorded and the inherent value of hedgerows as landscape features. When assessed against the Local Sites Selection Criteria, this section of the site still meets the standard for SLINC. The hedgerow along Middlemore Lane West has apparently been grubbed-out since being designated and therefore no longer meets the threshold for selection. The grassland of the field is recent and species-poor and does not meet the threshold for selection.

Recommendations (including further survey & site management/enhancement)	
1	Re-establishment of the defunct hedgerow through planting on the Middlemore Lane West boundary.
2	Management of hedgerow with rotational flailing but ideally traditional laying.
3	Reduction in intensive grazing to promote flora in the grassland which may support limestone grassland species due to the underlying geology. A cut and collect management could benefit the sward as well as leaving a long grass margin for the benefit of fauna.

Data Sources		
	Source	Date
Species and Habitat Data Source(s)	The Wildlife Trust for Birmingham and the Black Country. Ecorecord data search 2018.	10.09.2018
Geological Data Source(s)	British Geological Society 1:50,000 bedrock & superficial deposits GIS web map services from BGS website: <a href="https://www.bgs.ac.uk/data/services/mash-ups/desktopgis.html">https://www.bgs.ac.uk/data/services/mash-ups/desktopgis.html</a>	2018
Historic Data Sources(s)	Ordnance Survey Country Series Mapping 1884 – 1992.	2018
Assessment Author and Organisation	The Wildlife Trust for Birmingham and the Black Country.	2018

## [1] HABITATS/SPECIES OF NOTE TABLES – ATTRIBUTE DEFINITIONS

### STATUTORY (PROTECTED) -

**EHD** = EU Habitats Directive (plus where relevant the Annexe II or IV). **PBA** = Protection of Badgers Act 1992.

**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).

**BAP** – Habitats/Species included on latest UK BAP list of Priority Habitats/Species.

**NERC P.I.** - Habitats/Species included on current list of Principal Importance in England under Section 41 of the NERC Act (2006 or amended).

**RL** - Species included on Global IUCN & British Red Lists (Red Data Books).

**RARITY (HABITATS) - BIRMINGHAM & BLACK COUNTRY** - 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.

**AXIOPHYTE** - included on the Birmingham & the Black Country list of axiophytes.

### CONCERN (FAUNA SPECIES OF CONSERVATION CONCERN) -

Birds: **R** = Red List - species that are Globally Threatened according to the International Union for Nature Conservation criteria; those whose population or range has declined rapidly in recent years; and those that have declined historically and not shown a substantial recent recovery. **A** = Amber List - species with an unfavourable conservation status in Europe; those whose population or range has declined moderately in recent years; those whose population has declined historically but made a substantial recent recovery; rare breeders; and those with internationally important or localised populations.

Mammals: **ND** = National Decline and **ED** = England Decline as measured by the Mammal Societies Table of Recent Population Changes in the Native Species of Land Mammals.

Invertebrates: **RD** = Regional Decline identified in Butterfly Conservation West Midlands Regional Action Plan.

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

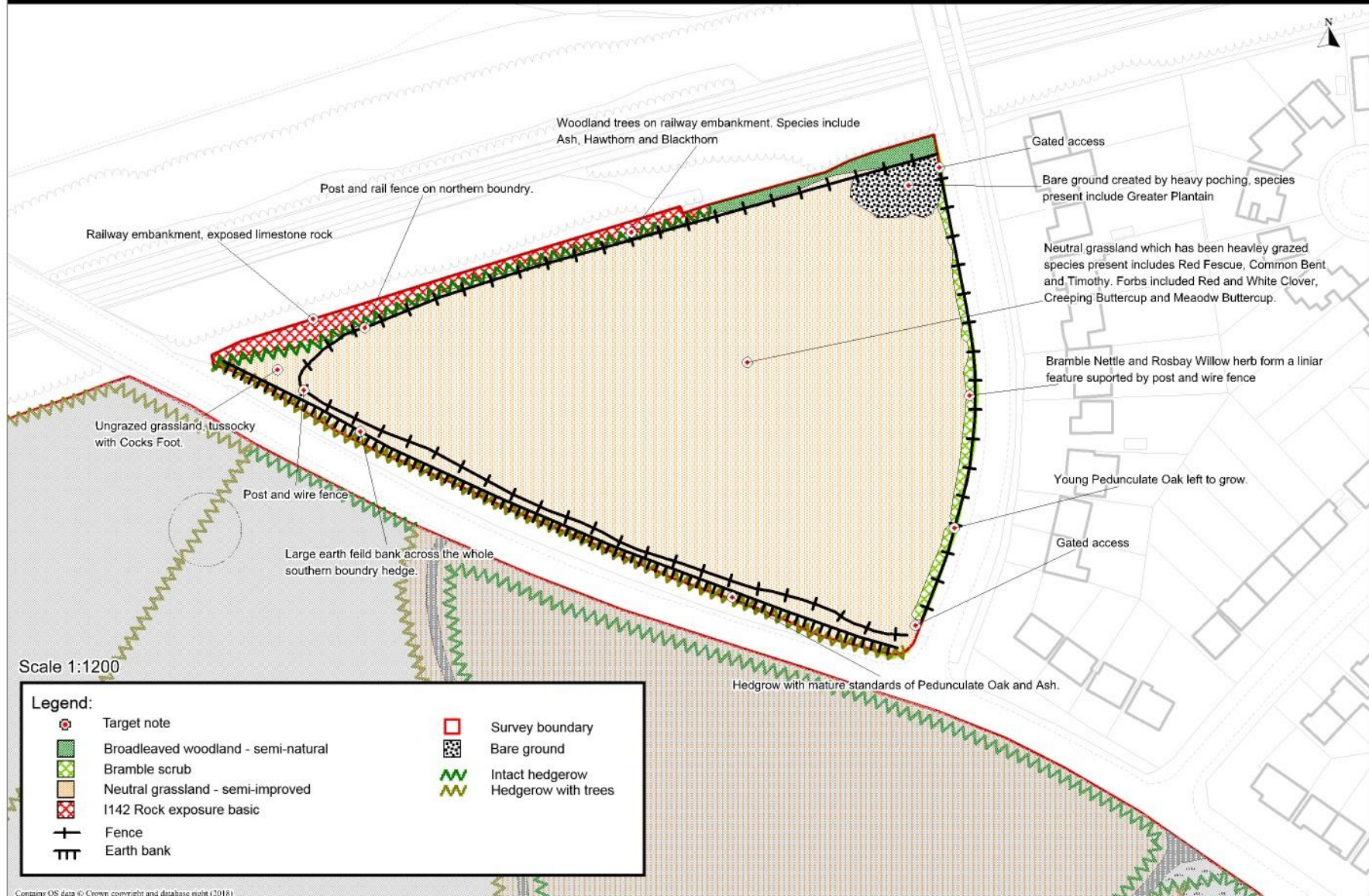
**[2] Species listed on Schedule 9 part 1 (animals) and part 2 (plants) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended** - this lists animals which may not be released or allowed to escape into the wild and plants which may not be planted or otherwise caused to grow in the wild.

# Map 1: Middlemore Lane West Current & Recommended Designation





# Map 1: Middlemore Lane West Phase 1 Habitat Map - Overview





## Site Photographs



Aspect from Middlemore Lane West across to the mature hedgerow on Bosty Lane.



From the roadside of Bosty Lane looking at the hedgerow - showing a mature Pedunculate Oak and flail management along the roadside.





View of now grubbed-out hedgerow on Middlemore Lane West

## Species Records

### FLORA

#### Grassland

Scientific Name	Common Name
<i>Agrostis capillaris</i>	Common Bent
<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	Cow Parsley
<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>	False Oat-grass
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	Cock's-foot
<i>Festuca rubra</i>	Red Fescue
<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire-fog
<i>Lolium perenne</i>	Perennial Rye-grass
<i>Phleum pratense</i>	Timothy
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort Plantain
<i>Plantago major</i>	Greater Plantain
<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	Meadow Buttercup
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Creeping Buttercup
<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	Broad-leaved Dock
<i>Senecio jacobaea</i>	Common Ragwort
<i>Taraxacum officinale agg.</i>	Dandelion
<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	Red Clover
<i>Trifolium repens</i>	White Clover

#### Hedge

Scientific Name	Common Name
<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>	Bracken
<i>Acer campestre</i>	Field Maple
<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	Sycamore
<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	Yarrow
<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	Cow Parsley
<i>Artemisia absinthium</i>	Wormwood
<i>Centaurea nigra</i>	Common Knapweed
<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>	Common Mouse-ear
<i>Chamerion angustifolium</i>	Rosebay Willowherb
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Creeping Thistle
<i>Corylus avellana</i>	Hazel
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn
<i>Dioscorea communis</i>	Black Bryony
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	Ash
<i>Glechoma hederacea</i>	Ground-ivy
<i>Hedera helix</i>	Ivy
<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	Hogweed
<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>	Cat's-ear
<i>Lathyrus pratensis</i>	Meadow Vetchling
<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>	Common Bird's-foot-trefoil
<i>Polygonum aviculare</i>	Knotgrass
<i>Potentilla reptans</i>	Creeping Cinquefoil
<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	Blackthorn
<i>Quercus robur</i>	Pedunculate Oak
<i>Rosa canina</i>	Dog-rose



<i>Rubus fruticosus agg.</i>	Bramble
<i>Senecio vulgaris</i>	Groundsel
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Common Nettle
<i>Vicia cracca</i>	Tufted Vetch

## FAUNA

Whole site

<i>Scientific Name</i>	Common Name
<i>Columba palumbus</i>	Woodpigeon
<i>Corvus corone subsp. corone</i>	Carrion Crow
<i>Sciurus carolinensis</i>	Eastern Grey Squirrel