

# Blaenau Gwent Wildlife Site/SINC Notification Form

## SITE SUMMARY

SITE NAME: Nine Arches Grassland

GRID REF: SO134108

SURVEYOR(S): Rebecca Price

Gemma Bode

SIZE (approx.): 5.54 ha

DATE OF SURVEY: 5/5/05

LOCAL AUTHORITY AREA:

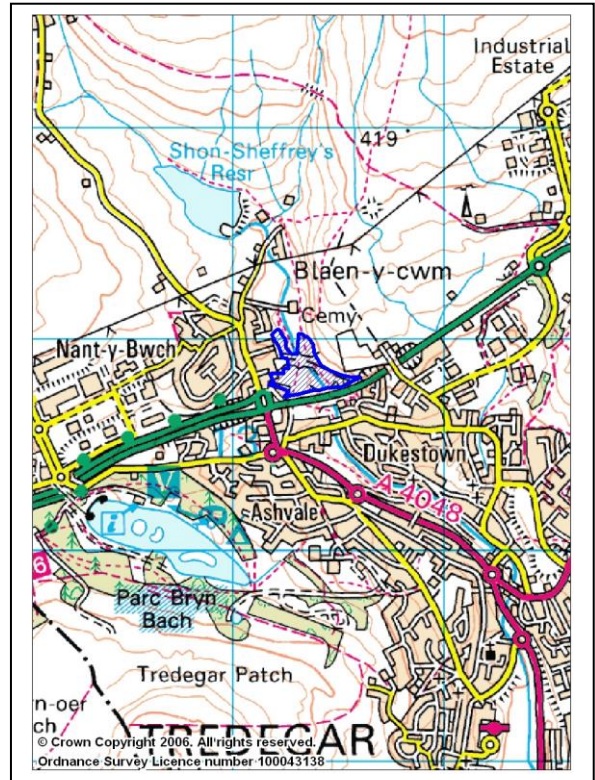
Blaenau Gwent

WARD: Tredegar

MAIN HABITAT TYPES PRESENT:

Habitat types	NVC type	Area (ha)
Semi improved neutral grassland	MG5/6	
Semi improved acid grassland	U4	
Marshy grassland	M23	
Scattered scrub		
Running water		

SKETCH MAP OF SITES LOCATION:



FULL DESCRIPTION OF SITE (including topography, adjacent land use, access and boundaries etc.):

A mosaic of species-rich neutral grassland and marshy grassland lying on the slopes to either side of the River Sirhowy and the flatter plain adjacent to the river itself, located to the north of the A465.

To the east of the river a tapering strip of land (next to the A465) holds the most interest, supporting a mix of neutral grassland with damper/marshy areas. Species include frequent-abundant *Succisa pratensis* (Devil's bit scabious) and *Centaurea nigra* (Common knapweed), *Leontodon hispidus* (Rough hawkbit) and *Lotus corniculatus* (Common bird's-foot-trefoil). *Plantago media* (Hoary plantain) was also recorded (Contributory Species in Guidelines for the Selection of Wildlife Sites in South Wales). A patch of locally frequent orchids (possible *Dactylorhiza praetermissa* (Southern marsh orchid) together with *Ranunculus flammula* (Lesser spearwort) and *Carex* (Sedge) spp. lies near the south end of a ditch which runs through the site. Other small marshy grassland patches include *Juncus* (Rush), *Galium palustre* (Marsh bedstraw), *Ranunculus flammula* (Lesser spearwort). A small area of acid grassland lies to the south of the site on a bank adjacent to the A465. To the west of the river the slopes supports a drier neutral sward that includes *Trifolium medium* (Zigzag clover). Scattered scrub is also located on the slopes and a strip of willow scrub lies next to the river.

An old viaduct crosses over the site, linking the valley sides. Below the viaduct and to its north west a further patch of marshy grassland includes *Lathyrus pratensis* (Meadow vetchling), *Achillea ptarmica* (Sneezewort), *Juncus* (Rush) spp and *Angelica sylvestris* (Wild angelica). This is fenced off from an otherwise improved field.

A further field to the east of the river (cut at time of survey in 2005) was revisited in 2006. The field supports a mosaic of marshy and neutral grassland dominated by rushes and tall grasses. A reasonable though localised herb diversity is present. The site is bordered by a mixture of land use including houses, cemetery, bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*), woodland and to the south enclosed damp neutral grassland managed for hay (though not of sufficient diversity to justify cWS).

Official Use Only: Site selected as a Wildlife Site/SINC? YES ☐ NO ☐ Date:

**Section(s) of the Wildlife Site Guidelines that this site qualifies under:**

H4) Neutral grasslands

H20) Mosaic habitats

**Qualifying Habitat types:** Neutral grasslands