

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in Caerphilly County Borough Council	
<u>LDP Policy Ref. NH 3.17</u>	SINC name: Cefn Gelligaer, west of Deri
Grid Reference: SO100064 (north) to SO113011 (south)	Area (hectares): 830
Survey date: 8th March, 6th September, 28th November, 4th and 12th December 2007	
Surveyed by: Dr Peter Sturgess (Hyder Consulting Ltd)	
(UDP policy reference: C11.9)	
Summary description	
<p>An extensive upland area of acid grassland, semi-improved acid grassland, marshy grassland and wet heath, locally forming mosaics and transitions between these communities. Other habitats include ponds, flushes, small streams and bare rock. The area north of Fochriw includes several areas of former mineral workings, which support dry heath, often with abundant bryophytes, lichens and grassland fungi. Some spoil-heaps have been reinstated as grassland and are developing a semi-natural character. Some of the more recent workings in the northern part support breeding Lapwings. The area to the south of Fochriw has a higher proportion of semi-improved acid grassland with rushes, large areas of Bracken, and there is a shallow valley dominated by marshy grassland and wet heath at its southern boundary.</p>	
Qualifying features	
<p>Extensive area of open countryside where semi-natural upland features predominate.</p> <p>Acid grassland, heath and semi-improved acid grassland with at least 7 indicator higher plant species, and at least 8 species of waxcap fungi.</p> <p>Breeding Lapwing (northern part of area).</p> <p>Locally significant populations of dragonflies (ponds in north of area).</p>	
Secondary features	
<p>Bracken, streams, flushes, ponds, lichen-rich dry stone walls, short grassland with ant-hills. The ponds in the north occasionally attract uncommon birds.</p>	
Potential value/ unconfirmed features	
<p>Likely to support good numbers of reptiles.</p> <p>Potential breeding habitat for wading birds.</p> <p>Close-cropped semi-improved acid grassland is likely to support good waxcap populations.</p> <p>Marshy grassland areas likely to support at least 12 marshy grassland indicator species.</p> <p>Old workings may support locally significant bryophyte and lichen communities.</p>	
Current management (including problems and opportunities for biodiversity enhancement)	
<p>Currently grazed by sheep, cattle and horses. Much of the grassland area shows evidence of some agricultural improvement/ over-grazing, resulting in relatively low vegetation diversity (especially in the southern part of the SINC). Bracken is locally dominant in the south of the SINC, reducing the area of more valuable habitats and species and increasing risk of fire. Evidence of fires was seen in several parts of the southern area, especially in areas of Gorse and Bracken. Other problems include off-road vehicles causing rutting in some areas, and fly tipping and litter beside the existing roads.</p>	

Access/ community use

Classified as open-access land. Several roads and footpaths cross the site.

Additional information:

Several areas with the SINC are borderline with regard to the SINC qualifying criteria, due to being relatively species poor, over-grazed or Bracken-dominated. However, they have been retained within the SINC as they form part of a larger mosaic, and to simplify mapping.

Some of the old workings are likely to be of historic interest.

Species list (Dominant species, SINC Criteria, RDB or other notable indicator species)

(LBAP species shown in **bold**, species confirmed by 2007 survey in *italics*)

Acid grassland and heath species (combined for all areas, typically occurring as a mosaic): *Calluna vulgaris*, *Vaccinium myrtillus*, *Ulex gallii*, *Potentilla erecta*, *Rumex acetosella*, *Galium saxatile*, *Agrostis capillaris*, *Molinia caerulea*, *Nardus stricta*, *Festuca ovina*, *Carex binervis*, *Carex pilulifera*, *Carex panicea*, *Juncus squarrosus*, *Juncus effusus*, *Luzula multiflora*, *Luzula campestris*, *Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus*, *Dicranum scoparium*, *Pleurozium schreberi*, *Hypnum jutlandicum*, *Sphagnum subnitens*, *Sphagnum denticulatum*, *Aulacomnium palustre*, *Polytrichum commune*, *P.fomosum*, *P.juniperinum*. *Hylocomium splendens* was noted in the north of the area. *Cladonia* lichens are locally abundant, particularly on disused spoil.

More heavily grazed areas of semi-improved acid grassland had a similar species list, but with a much higher proportion of grasses, *Juncus effusus* and Bracken. The most common species in these areas were *Agrostis capillaris*, *Nardus stricta*, *Danthonia decumbens*, *Festuca ovina*, *Deschampsia flexuosa*, *Poa annua*, *Cynosurus cristatus*, *Galium saxatile*, *Potentilla erecta*, *Trifolium repens*, *Urtica dioica*, *Digitalis purpurea*, *Cirsium palustre*, *Rumex acetosella*, *Ulex gallii*, *Carex binervis*, *Juncus effusus*, *Luzula campestris*, *Pteridium aquilinum*, *Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus*, *Pleurozium schreberi*, *Scleropodium purum*, *Polytrichum juniperinum*.

Grassland fungi recorded in and around the Fochriw Tips included *Hygrocybe aurantiosplendens*, *H.chlorophana*, *H. coccinea*, *H. conica*, the rare *H.lacmus*, *H. laeta*, *H.pratensis*, *H. psittacina*, *H.punicea*, *H.reidii*, *H.russocoriacea*, *H.splendidissima*, *H.virginea*, *Clavinulopsis fusiformis*, *C. lueoalba*, *C. corniculata* and *Geoglossum fallax*.

Marshy grassland species in ponds, flushes and ditches (combined for all areas): *Ranunculus flammula*, *Galium palustre*, *Montia fontana*, *Callitriche sp.*, *Ranunculus omiophyllus*, *Ranunculus cf peltatus*, *Potamogeton polygonifolius*, *Cirsium palustre*, *Molinia caerulea*, *Glyceria fluitans*, *Glyceria maxima*, *Elodea sp.*, *Nymphoides peltata*, *Juncus effusus*, *Juncus bulbosus*, *Juncus acutiflorus*, *Carex echinata*, *Sphagnum fallax*, *Sphagnum palustre*, *Sphagnum denticulatum*, *Aulacomnium palustre*, *Polytrichum commune*, *Fissidens adianthoides*, *Calliergonella cuspidata*.

Marshy grassland/ wet heath in southern area (SO133986): *Vaccinium myrtillus*, *Calluna vulgaris*, *Erica tetralix*, *Potamogeton polygonifolius*, *Galium saxatile*, *Wahlenbergia hederacea*, *Potentilla erecta*, *Molinia caerulea*, *Agrostis capillaris*, *Danthonia decumbens*, *Nardus stricta*, *Carex echinata*, *Carex panicea*, *Juncus effusus*, *Juncus bulbosus*, *Juncus squarrosus*, *Juncus acutiflorus*, *Polytrichum commune*, *Sphagnum palustre*, *Sphagnum subnitens*, *Sphagnum papillosum*, *Sphagnum fallax*.

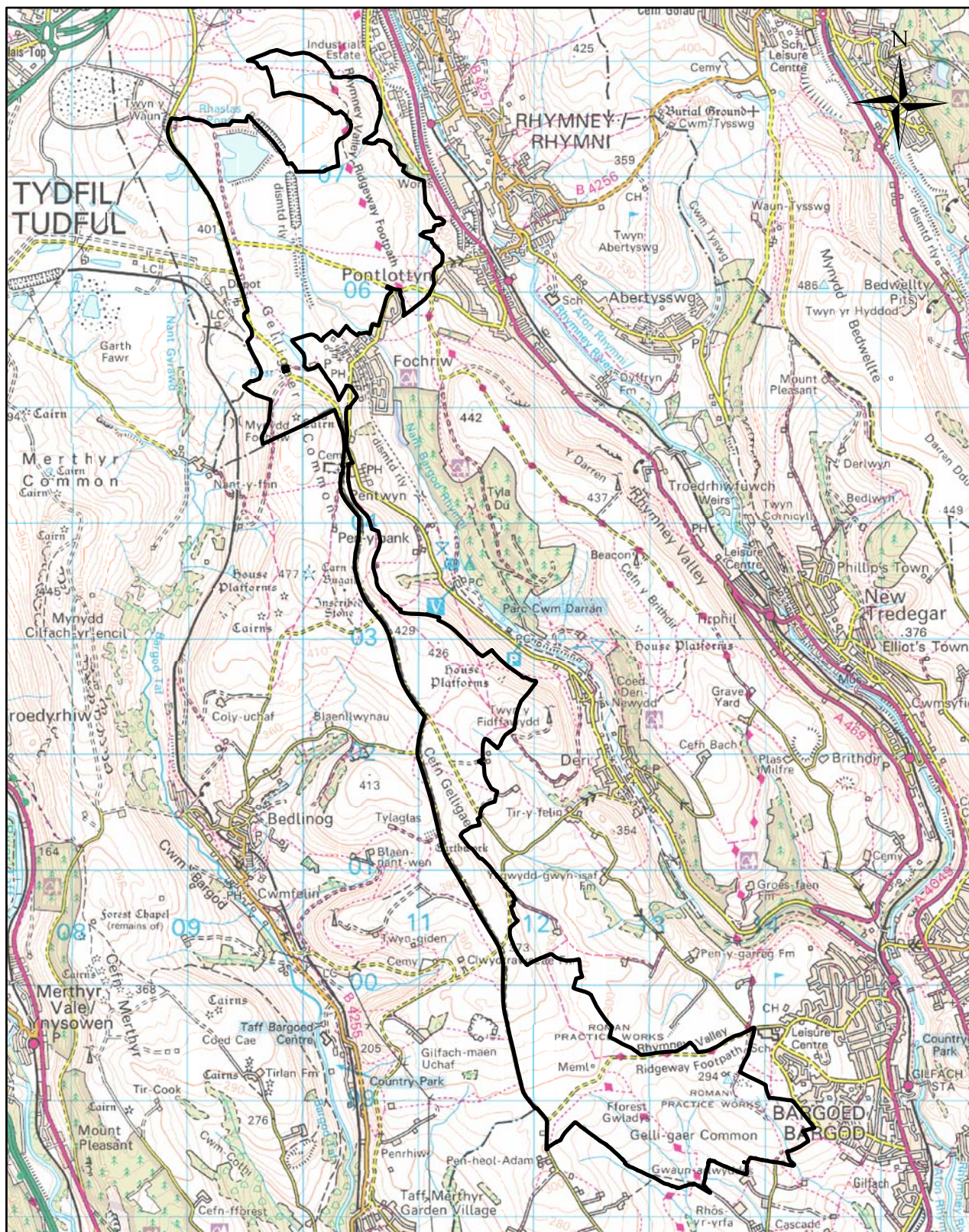
Fauna observations: Mole, **Lapwing** (several displaying in northern area), **Skylark** (very numerous), **Buzzard**, Raven, Grey Heron, Meadow Pipit, **Kestrel**, Goldfinch, Stonechat, Linnet. Large numbers of **Common Frogs** and frogspawn in the ponds and ditches. Meadow Brown Butterfly. **Black Darter Dragonfly**, **Emerald Damselfly**, **Emperor Dragonfly**, **Common Blue Damselfly**, **Common Darter Dragonfly**.

Additional records from desk study: **Brown Hare**, **Whiskered/ Brandt's Bat**, **Natterer's Bat**, **Noctule**, **Pipistrelle**, **Soprano Pipistrelle**, Red Kite (in 2002 and 2005), **Curlew** (in 2000 and 2004), Peregrine, Grey Partridge (1995), Golden Plover, Greenshank, Wheatear, Snipe, **Southern Hawker Dragonfly**, **Common Hawker Dragonfly**, **Golden-ringed Dragonfly**, **Four-spotted Chaser Dragonfly**, **Keeled Skimmer Dragonfly**, **Blue-tailed Damselfly**, **Azure Damselfly**, **Broad-bodied Chaser Dragonfly**, **Large Red Damselfly**, **Scarce Blue-tailed Damselfly**, *Carex paniculata*, *Narthecium ossifragum*.

Species recorded in the same 1km grid squares include: Cuckoo, Tree Pipit, **Yellowhammer**, Pied Flycatcher, **Tree Sparrow**, Redstart, **Green Woodpecker**, **Bullfinch**, Whinchat, Ring Ouzel, Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary Butterfly, Dingy Skipper Butterfly.

Caerphilly County Borough Council
Site of Importance for Nature Conservation
LDP Policy Ref: NH 3.17 (SINC 009)
Cefn Gelligaer, West of Deri 819 Ha

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Gall hyn arwain at erlyniad neu achos sifil. Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Caerffili, 100025372, 2008.