

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in Caerphilly County Borough Council	
<u>LDP Policy Ref. NH 3.32</u>	SINC name: Markham Railway Line, Markham
Grid reference: SO171015	Area (hectares): 9
Survey date: 17th August 2007	
Surveyed by: Dr Peter Sturgess (Hyder Consulting Ltd.)	
(UDP policy reference: C11.33)	
Summary description	
<p>This site includes a steep-sided wooded valley and disused railway lines along the upper valley sides. The River Sirhowy SINC (NH 3.11) is immediately adjacent to the eastern boundary of this site. The valley-side woodlands are characterised by a dense canopy of Alder, Sessile oak, Goat willow, Hazel and an understorey of dense Bramble, with occasional open areas of Bracken. The woodlands are relatively young, but include a number semi-natural indicator species, particularly near the river. Some parts of the upper valley-side woodland have a semi-natural character, with a lighter understorey and a ground flora of Bracken, Bilberry, Wavy hair-grass and Bluebell. A re-profiled tip at SO171015 supports a mix of acid grassland and scrub. Semi-improved neutral grassland is also present in a few more open areas.</p>	
Qualifying features	
Broadleaved woodland with an assemblage of semi-natural indicator species.	
Main river with a largely unmodified channel.	
Acid grassland with at least 7 indicator species.	
Secondary features	
Reprofiled colliery spoil.	
Scrub.	
Bracken.	
Semi-improved neutral grassland.	
Potential value/ unconfirmed features	
The site is likely to provide good foraging and roosting habitat for bats (it is probably used by feeding Lesser horseshoe bats).	
The woodland has potential to support Dormice.	
The river corridor is likely to be used by Otters, migratory fish and riparian birds.	
The open grassland area/railway line is likely to support reptiles.	
Current management (including problems and opportunities for biodiversity enhancement)	
The majority of the site appears unmanaged. The disused railway along the southwestern boundary has recently been redeveloped as a cycleway. Japanese knotweed occurs locally beside the river.	

Access/ community use

There is no formal public access to the majority of the site, but there is a new cycleway along the southwestern disused railway line (also partially a SINC NH 3.32). There are also a number of informal paths through the site. The central clearing in the valley floor (SO172015) is used for clay shooting.

Additional information

Several adjacent parts of the valley sides are also likely to be of value for wildlife, particularly the mix of scrub and Bracken to the south, which should be considered at future SINC review. This SINC is continuous with NH 3.148 Mynydd y Grug to the southeast.

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

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

Woodland canopy and shrub species: *Quercus petraea*, *Alnus glutinosa*, *Corylus avellana*, *Betula pubescens*, *Ilex aquifolium*, *Salix caprea*, *Fagus sylvatica*, *Salix cinerea*, *Rubus fruticosus*, *Hedera helix*, *Fraxinus excelsior*, *Sorbus aucuparia*, *Crataegus monogyna*, *Acer pseudoplatanus*, *Carpinus betulus*, *Lonicera periclymenum*, *Calluna vulgaris*, *Vaccinium myrtillus*, *Rubus idaeus*, *Rosa arvensis*, *Rosa canina*, *Ulex gallii*, *Ulex europaeus*.

Woodland ground flora species: *Geum urbanum*, *Circaea lutetiana*, *Lysimachia nemorum*, *Oxalis acetosella*, *Lamium galeobdolon*, ***Hyacinthoides non-scripta***, *Digitalis purpurea*, *Oenanthe crocata*, *Veronica montana*, *Viola riviniana*, *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*, *Urtica dioica*, *Fallopia japonica*, *Agrostis capillaris*, *Holcus mollis*, *Deschampsia flexuosa*, *Deschampsia cespitosa*, *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, *Carex remota*, *Pteridium aquilinum*, *Blechnum spicant*, *Dryopteris filix-mas*, *Dryopteris dilatata*, *Atrichum undulatum*, *Mnium hornum*, *Kindbergia praelonga*, *Eurhynchium striatum*, *Conocephalum conicum*, *Pellia sp.*, *Diplophyllum albicans*.

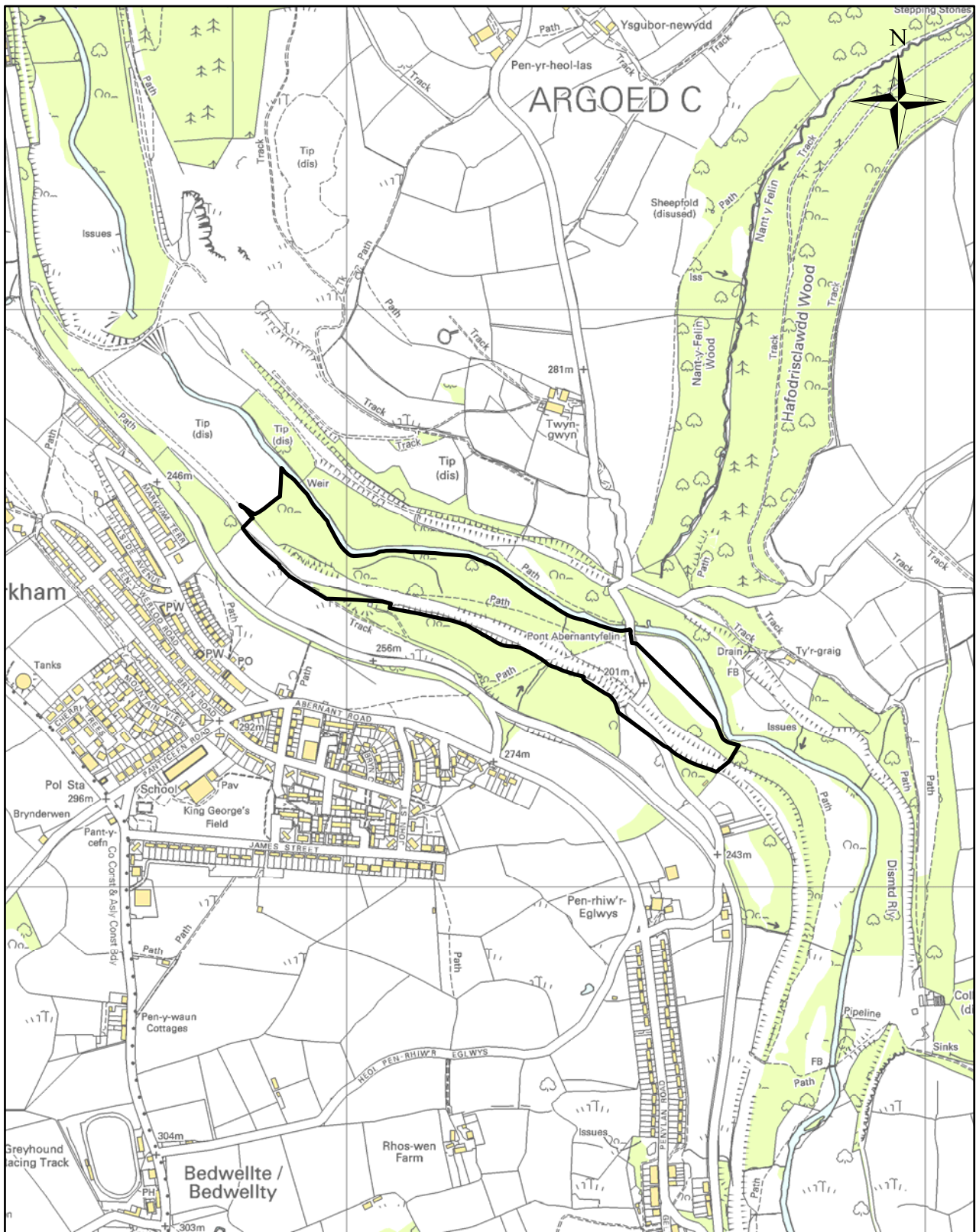
Grassland species (combined list for disused railway/ coal spoil and clearings): *Centaurea nigra*, *Trifolium pratense*, *Potentilla erecta*, *Plantago lanceolata*, *Leontodon hispidus*, *Lotus corniculatus*, *Ranunculus acris*, *Galium saxatile*, *Pilosella officinarum*, *Veronica officinalis*, *Filago minima*, *Euphrasia sp.*, *Anaphalis margaritacea*, *Veronica chamaedrys*, *Rumex acetosella*, *Fragaria vesca*, *Cirsium palustre*, *Linum catharticum*, *Centaureum erythraea*, *Holcus lanatus*, *Agrostis capillaris*, *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, *Festuca rubra*, *Cynosurus cristatus*, *Juncus effusus*, *Juncus tenuis*, *Luzula campestris*, *Rhynchospora squarrosus*, *Polytrichum juniperinum*, *Polytrichum commune*, *Polytrichum urnigerum*.

Fauna observations: *Rabbit*, *Fox*, ***Kingfisher***, *Blue Tit*, *Long-tailed Tit*, *Treecreeper*, ***Brown Trout***, *Meadow Brown Butterfly*, *Gatekeeper Butterfly*, *Green-veined White Butterfly*.

Additional species noted from desk study and consultation: *Lythrum salicaria*, *Festuca ovina*.

Caerphilly County Borough Council
Site of Importance for Nature Conservation
LDP Policy Ref: NH 3.22 (SINC 033)
Markham Railway Line, Markham 9 Ha

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