

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in Caerphilly County Borough Council	
<u>LDP Policy Ref. NH 3.63</u>	SINC name: Cefn Hengoed Hillside, North of Hengoed
Grid reference: ST150959	Area (hectares): 15
Survey date: 22nd May 2007	Surveyed by: Dr Peter Sturgess (Hyder Consulting Ltd.)
(UDP policy reference: C11.52)	
Summary description	
<p>The SINC supports a mix of semi-natural woodland, semi-improved neutral grassland and Bracken, partly on colliery spoil. There are also several hedgerows. The main woodland area is at the south of the site, although there are smaller pockets elsewhere. The canopy mainly comprises Oak, Birch, Hazel and Goat willow, with a good range of semi-natural woodland indicators in the ground flora. The woodland also contains several small mossy rock outcrops. The grassland areas are mainly grazed by horses and locally grade into Bracken. They include a range of grassland types, ranging from wet to dry and acid to neutral in character, reflecting the range of soil types. In some places recently cleared of woodland and scrub, the grassland sward also includes a number of typical woodland plants.</p>	
Qualifying features	
<p>Semi-natural woodland with an assemblage of indicator species.</p> <p>Semi-improved neutral grassland with at least 8 indicator species.</p>	
Secondary features	
<p>Scrub and hedgerows.</p> <p>Bracken.</p>	
Potential value/ unconfirmed features	
<p>The woodland area is likely to provide foraging and roosting opportunities for bats.</p> <p>The woodland has potential for use by Dormice.</p> <p>The margins of the woodland and scrub habitats are likely to be used by reptiles.</p> <p>The range of habitats is likely to support a good range of invertebrates and breeding birds.</p> <p>The presence of Violets within Bracken stands has potential for Violet-feeding fritillary butterflies.</p>	
Current management (including problems and opportunities for biodiversity enhancement)	
<p>Horses graze the grassland areas and the grazing intensity appears too heavy to sustain the current vegetation diversity. A reduction (rather than cessation) of the grazing pressure would be beneficial for biodiversity. Most of the woodland habitats generally appear unmanaged, although some woodland areas in the centre of the site have recently been cleared and others are subject to horse grazing. Mismanagement and further vegetation clearance in order to develop the land are current threats to the nature conservation value of this site. These have already taken place over a number of years and resulted in the loss of nature conservation value from the central part of the SINC (now excluded from the SINC), and the subsequent associated decline in the value of the remaining parts. Appropriate management of the site would enhance its biodiversity value.</p>	

Access / community use

Public footpaths run through several parts of the SINC. There are also a number of informal paths, particularly in the main woodland area.

Additional information

The woodland clearance and heavy grazing pressure in the centre of the site are currently having a detrimental impact, but positive management would enhance the site for biodiversity. Current planning permissions exist for the central part of the site, which has been excluded from the SINC, but the hedgerow along the eastern boundary has been retained as linking habitat between north and south. The retention and enhancement of this hedgerow has been conditioned as part of the planning consent, which will ensure that some habitat connectivity remains. The fields adjoining the north of the SINC have some value for nature conservation and may merit further survey as part of a future SINC review.

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 scrub species: *Quercus robur*, *Quercus petraea*, *Betula pubescens*, *Corylus avellana*, *Crataegus monogyna*, *Ilex aquifolium*, *Rubus fruticosus*, *Lonicera periclymenum*, *Betula pendula*, *Alnus glutinosa*, *Fraxinus excelsior*, *Hedera helix*, *Sorbus aucuparia*, *Salix caprea*, *Fagus sylvatica*, *Prunus padus*, *Salix cinerea*, *Ribes uva-crispa*, *Acer pseudoplatanus*, *Malus sp.*, *Frangula alnus*, *Viburnum opulus*, *Ulex europaeus*.

Woodland ground flora species: ***Hyacinthoides non-scripta***, *Circaea lutetiana*, *Viola riviniana*, *Stellaria holostea*, *Geum urbanum*, *Digitalis purpurea*, *Oxalis acetosella*, *Ranunculus ficaria*, *Lamiastrum galeobdolon*, *Sanicula europaea*, *Anemone nemorosa*, *Teucrium scorodonia*, *Solidago virgaurea*, *Moerhingia trinervia*, *Potentilla erecta*, *Lysimachia nemorum*, *Veronica montana*, *Chamerion angustifolium*, *Succisa pratensis*, *Scrophularia nodosa*, *Mercurialis perennis*, *Angelica sylvestris*, *Fragaria vesca*, *Conopodium majus*, *Agrostis capillaris*, *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, *Holcus mollis*, *Deschampsia flexuosa*, *Deschampsia cespitosa*, *Festuca gigantea*, *Carex remota*, *Pteridium aquilinum*, *Blechnum spicant*, *Dryopteris dilatata*, *Dryopteris filix-mas*, *Dryopteris affinis*, *Athyrium filix-femina*, *Mnium hornum*, *Kindbergia praelonga*, *Eurhynchium striatum*, *Polytrichum formosum*, *Pseudotaxiphyllum elegans*, *Atrichum undulatum*.

Semi-improved neutral grassland/ Bracken species (combined due to gradation between the different habitats): *Lotus corniculatus*, *Trifolium pratense*, *Potentilla reptans*, *Centaurea nigra*, *Hypochaeris radicata*, *Lathyrus pratensis*, *Trifolium repens*, *Conopodium majus*, *Vicia cracca*, *Rumex acetosa*, *Ranunculus acris*, ***Hyacinthoides non-scripta***, *Rumex obtusifolius*, *Hypericum pulchrum*, *Succisa pratensis*, *Cirsium palustre*, *Potentilla erecta*, *Rumex acetosella*, *Solidago virgaurea*, *Anemone nemorosa*, *Lathyrus linifolius*, *Lysimachia nemorum*, *Plantago lanceolata*, *Veronica chamaedrys*, *Pimpinella saxifraga*, *Digitalis purpurea*, *Agrostis capillaris*, *Cynosurus cristatus*, *Lolium perenne*, *Festuca rubra*, *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, *Holcus lanatus*, *Arrhenatherum elatius*, *Poa trivialis*, *Luzula campestris*, *Luzula multiflora*, *Juncus acutiflorus*, *Juncus effusus*, *Juncus conglomeratus*, *Rhynchospora squarrosus*.

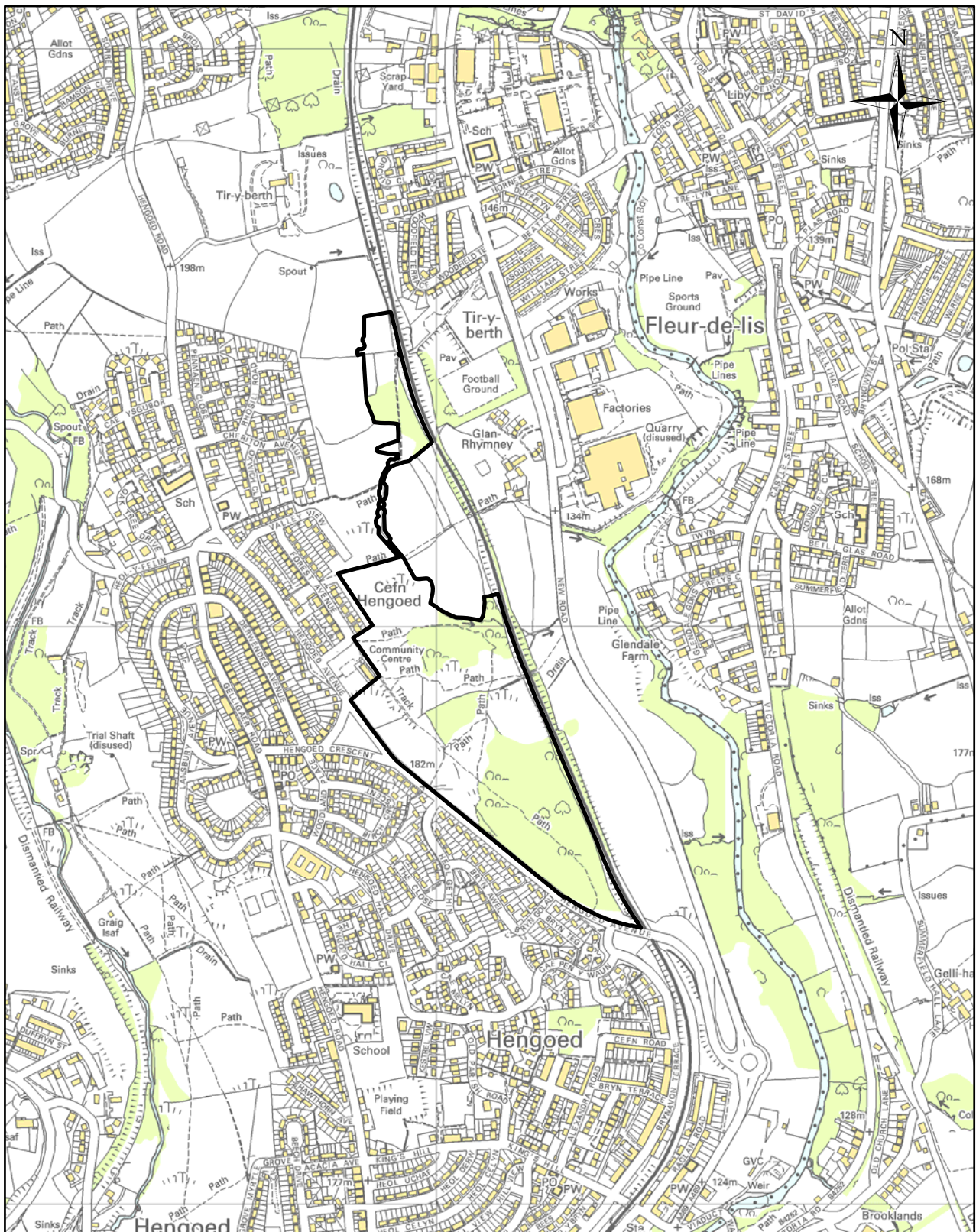
Additional species present in the more damp grassland areas include: *Cirsium palustre*, *Ranunculus flammula*, *Lotus pedunculatus*, *Galium palustre*, *Lycopus europaeus*, *Veronica beccabunga*, ***Dactylorhiza sp.***, *Agrostis stolonifera*, *Molinia caerulea*, *Carex viridula*, *Carex ovalis*, *Carex pseudocyperus*, *Juncus effusus*, *Juncus conglomeratus*, *Calliergonella cuspidata*.

Fauna observations: *Mole*, *Grey Squirrel*, ***House Sparrow***, *Blue Tit*, *Blackbird*, *Robin*, *Long-tailed Tit*, *Starling*, *Chiffchaff*, *Great Tit*, *Blackcap*, *Whitethroat*, *Common Blue Butterfly*, *Speckled Wood Butterfly*, *Chimney-sweeper Moth*.

Additional species noted from desk study and consultation: ***Dormouse*** (unconfirmed record, 2000), ***Buzzard***, ***Common Frog***, *Malus sylvestris*, *Salix aurita*, *Calluna vulgaris*, *Serratula tinctoria*, *Viola palustris*, *Adoxa moschatellina*, *Nardus stricta*. ***Great Crested Newt*** (within 400m of SINC). ***Bat*** records from nearby urban areas.

Caerphilly County Borough Council
Site of Importance for Nature Conservation
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Cefn Hengoed Hillside, North of Hengoed 15 Ha

1:10,000



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